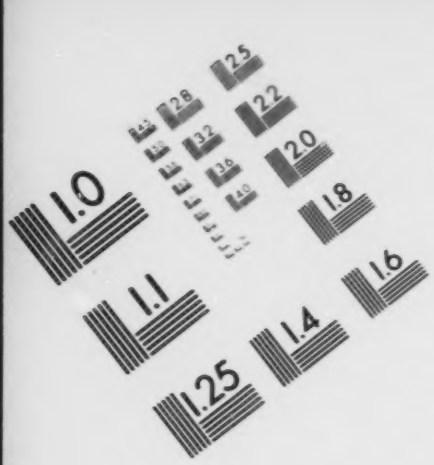

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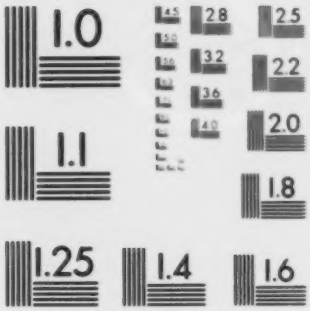

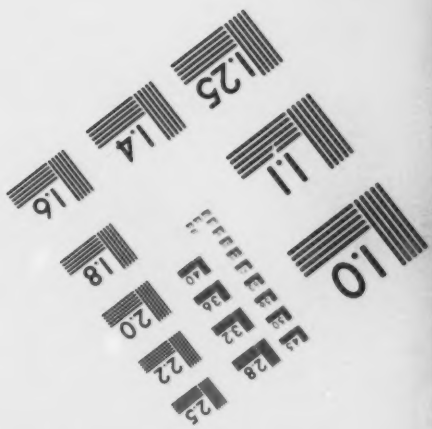

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ABSTRACT

This book contains 50 hands-on activities representing most subjects taught at the secondary school level in the Caribbean. It lists the order of activities by chapter and name of each activity in the general table of contents. The first chapter, Investigating and Organizing Ideas, presents six activities and discusses semantic mapping, mind maps, discussion webs, and the K-W-L (What I Know - What I Want to know - What I Learned) strategy. Chapter 2, Study Skills, presents eight activities and discusses using a textbook, library skills, research skills, outlining, and preparing for examinations. Chapter 3, Working with Texts, presents eight activities and discusses the DARTS (Directed Activities Related to Texts) approach which shows how textbooks can be adapted using a variety of techniques. Chapter 4, The Skills of Writing, presents 10 activities and discusses natural behaviors for writers, writing ideas, understanding children's spelling, dictionary games, and cohesive writing devices. Chapter 5, Ideas for Working with Less Academically Able Students, presents 18 activities and discusses reading difficulties; activities for listening, speaking, and drama across the curriculum; encouraging reading and writing in literature class; and science and mathematics activities. A 29-item list of written resources developed in compiling the book is attached. (RS)

****
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Strategies for Improving Language Across the Curriculum

Ideas and Activities for Every Classroom

Series of Caribbean Volunteer Publications

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England (**From 1999 onwards**)

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December, 1994.

INTRODUCTION

The Workshop and the Book

This book has been produced as a follow-up to workshops which took place in the Caribbean involving all VSO volunteers in the area. Teachers discussed strategies which they have used to address the problems they face in the classroom. The focus was mainly on secondary school children.

The workshop and subsequent book were designed to assist VSO education volunteers working in the region. Over the years of VSO involvement in the Caribbean, many volunteers have identified language issues as areas for cross curriculum development for practical day to day classroom use.

The VSO Field Office would have liked to involve more colleagues at the workshop but was unable to because of financial constraints. It was therefore intended that volunteers take the information back to their workplaces and either; formally through staff professional development days or more informally through discussions with individual colleagues, feed back the information to be shared with all staff. The end result was to assist the students to improve their overall academic performance and in particular students' CXC examination results. Language is the responsibility of all departments. A whole school policy is very important and all members of staff should be involved.

This book will be circulated to all VSOs and their colleagues as well as to Ministries of Education and the curriculum development units. We hope that it will contribute in a small way to the continuing development of the education system within the region. The book which we have produced cannot, of course, be comprehensive but it should provide material for teachers in all subject areas.

Good luck with your work and do share with other teachers any new activities which you create.

CHILDREN REMEMBER

5% OF WHAT THEY HEAR

10% OF WHAT THEY SEE

80% OF WHAT THEY DO

Contents:

This book contains at least fifty hands-on activities representing most subjects taught at the secondary school level in the Caribbean. For your convenience the book lists the order by chapter and name of each activity in the general table of contents. The book also contains a chapter table of contents so that you can see at a glance which activity matches the discussion of the concept relating to it. All activities are also marked by an icon so when looking for something to do check for the bear waving at you!

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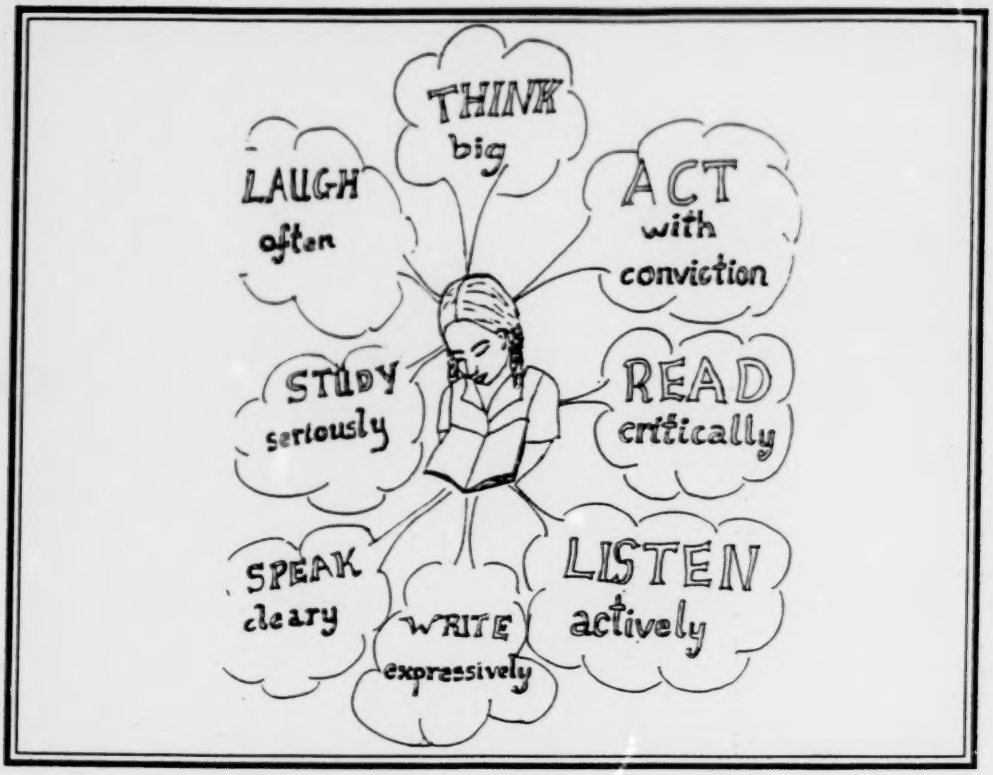
CHAPTER 1

INVESTIGATING AND ORGANISING IDEAS



Contents:

- Introduction
- The Importance of Mapping
- Project Strategies
- Summary

1. INVESTIGATING AND ORGANISING IDEAS

INTRODUCTION

THE IMPORTANCE OF MAPPING

- **Semantic Mapping**

  Characteristics

  Uses

  Activity 1.1 — Vocabulary Development : "He said, she said".

  Word Mapping

  Brainstorming

  Categories of Meaning

  Appropriate Meanings.

- **Pattern Notes**

  Guidelines for Pattern Notes

  An Illustration of Pattern Notes

- **Mind Maps**

  Definition and Uses

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- **Discussion Webbs**
- **The K - W - L Strategy**

  Definition and Characteristics

  Activity 1.4 - A K-W-L Frame for a History Lesson on Caribs

PROJECT STRATEGIES

Introduction

Activity 1.5 - Project Planning across Subject Areas

Activity 1.6 - Group Contract Sample Form

SUMMARY

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1. INVESTIGATING AND ORGANISING IDEAS

INTRODUCTION

Children often have a depth of general and specific knowledge in all areas of the curriculum. They come to a topic/subject with a wealth of information which the teacher needs to uncover. This section contains some strategies for uncovering this information, i.e. investigating and organising ideas.

The following topics will be discussed in this section:

- Semantic Mapping -
  - pattern notes
  - mind maps
  - disscussion webs
  - the K-W-L strategy
- Project Strategies.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MAPPING

Most children can explain their ideas best through speech and language. Mapping encourages children to contribute their ideas as they come to them, to build on the ideas of others, to develop ideas aloud, to watch ideas developing, to think creatively and to develop lateral thinking skills.

Mapping is a useful strategy for the students' individual use e.g. in developing story ideas, essay writing and sequential thinking, as in Science.

Mapping is a strategy which can be used in all areas of the curriculum to establish what students already know and what they need to learn. It can help teachers establish a baseline, plan lessons and evaluate learning.

There are many other strategies and examples of mapping in most of the sections of this book.

Semantic Mapping

Characteristics

Semantic mapping is a method for graphically and visually displaying relationships among ideas and concepts. It:

- emphasises, cognitive processes and encourages problem solving.
- encourages higher thought processes.
- stimulates ideas.
- encourages oral interaction among students and teachers.
- enhances literary discussions that highlight plot development, setting characterisation and theory.
- improves reading comprehension
- enhances the development of instructional units.
- stimulates the composition process.
- encourages interaction and understanding in various content areas.
- encourages the interaction of reading, writing, listening and oral discussion in all areas of the curriculum.

Semantic mapping usually begins with a brainstorming activity in which the teacher encourages students to verbalise associations or ideas while the teacher maps the ideas on the board (or on card or paper for longer term use and classroom display). The content of the map varies according to the learning and teaching objectives and the subject matter to be visualised.

Uses

A semantic map may be used as:

- an introductory activity to organise and extend previous knowledge or explore various possibilities
- a discussion activity to visualise relationships and to teach understandings within the lesson
- a follow-up activity to reinforce learning or test understanding.

Activity 1.1 - Vocabulary Development : "He said, she said."

Word Mapping increases vocabulary development by helping children identify words with similar meanings, understand multiple meanings for words and perceive relationships among words and ideas.

The activity is stimulated through brainstorming and group or class discussion.

This activity was developed to help children identify and use words other than "SAID" to express precise meanings in their speaking and writing.

Brainstorming

"SAID"

spoke	whispered	shrieked	croaked	joked
shouted	hollered	called	asked	reported
cried	bellowed	murmured	prayed	retorted
bawled	screamed	muttered	begged	replied
questioned	answered	demanded		

Categories of Meaning

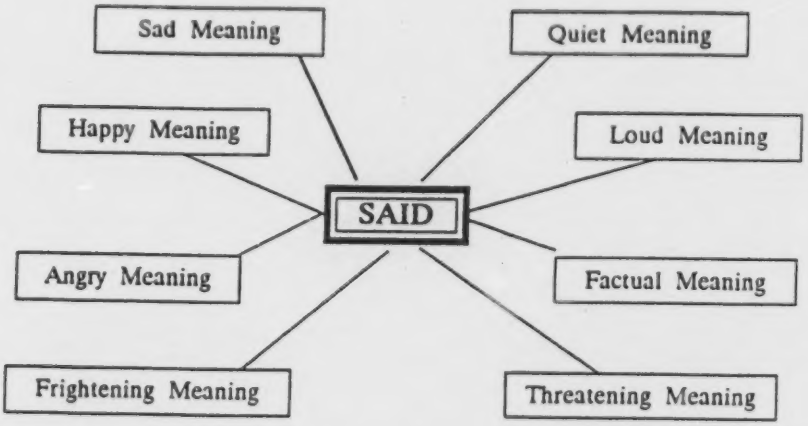


Fig. 1:01 : Categories of Meaning

Appropriate Meanings

Some may come in more than one category.

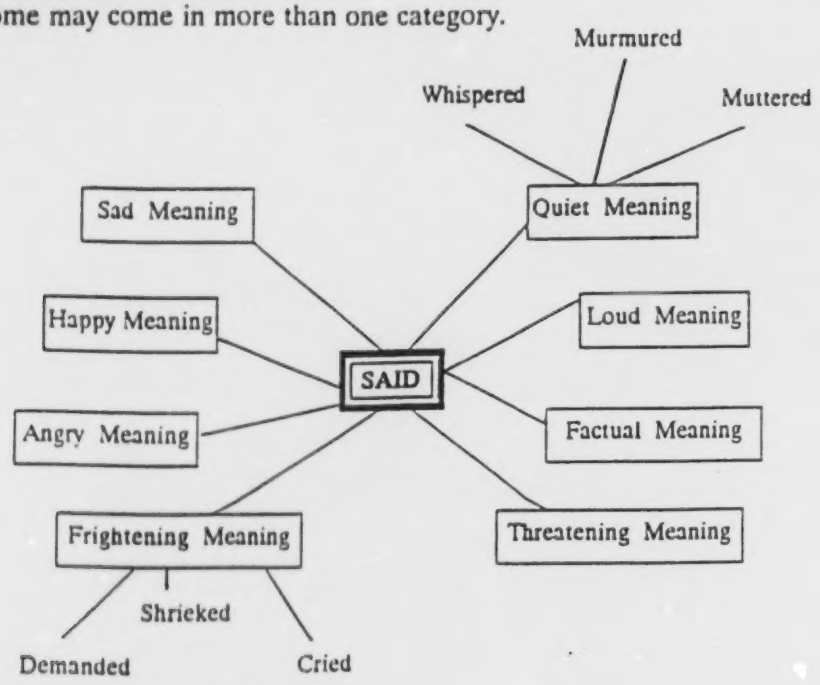


Fig. 1:02 : Appropriate Meanings

This map can be completed on paper or card and displayed in the classroom for spelling, vocabulary, etc.

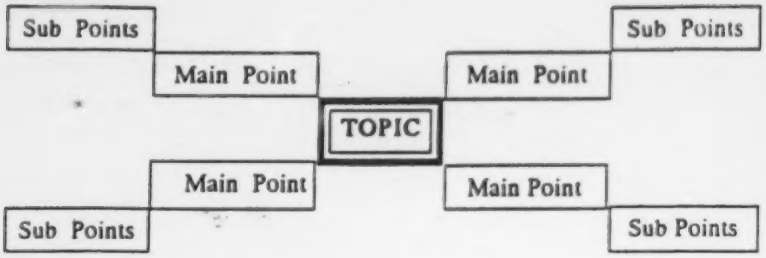
Pattern Notes

Semantic mapping is also used as a shortcut to organising writing. Some people have called this technique **pattern notes.**

Guidelines for Pattern Notes:

1. The title/main idea/topic is written in a box or bubble in the centre of the page.
2. Working in a clockwise direction, themes/major points are written along lines radiating out from the centre.
3. Subsidiary points branch off from main branches as appropriate.
4. A key word or phrase is used to sum up the whole point.
5. Dotted lines/arrows can bring out links, connections.
6. Students develop their work/essays around these basic guidelines.

An Illustration of Pattern Notes



Mind Maps

Definition and Uses - "An Illustration of Pattern Notes".

A mind map is a diagrammatic representation of a series of related topics intended to illustrate the ways in which the topics are associated with each other. They are usually given as an exercise **after** students have made a preliminary study of the individual topics as separate items in a linear sequence.

The Aim of a mind map is to show as many connections and as many directions as possible.

Most students need to be given an example to look at before they grasp the idea. Once they understand this, most will happily spend hours and hours producing elaborate and artistic creations. We hope that during this time they are also learning our subject.

Evaluation of Students' Maps

We are looking for:
- a) the number of topics they can include
- b) the way they are arranged
- c) the quality of their drawings

and **most important**
- d) the number of interrelationships they develop.

Thus mind maps
- a) help students to become familiar with topics
- b) encourage lateral thinking
- c) stimulate interest in a subject even amongst the less able
- d) be displayed in the classroom.

Activity 1.2 - Questions for Mind Mapping Energy

Using the guidelines for pattern notes and the illustration of pattern notes discussed previously.

Construct a mind map for energy using the following questions to guide your points and sub-points.

How is the Sun's energy put to use by man?

How does the Sun produce energy?

How does this energy reach the Earth?

How is the energy used directly?

How is the energy used indirectly?

What are the environmental consequences?

Activity 1.3 - Brainstorming an Idea Using Air

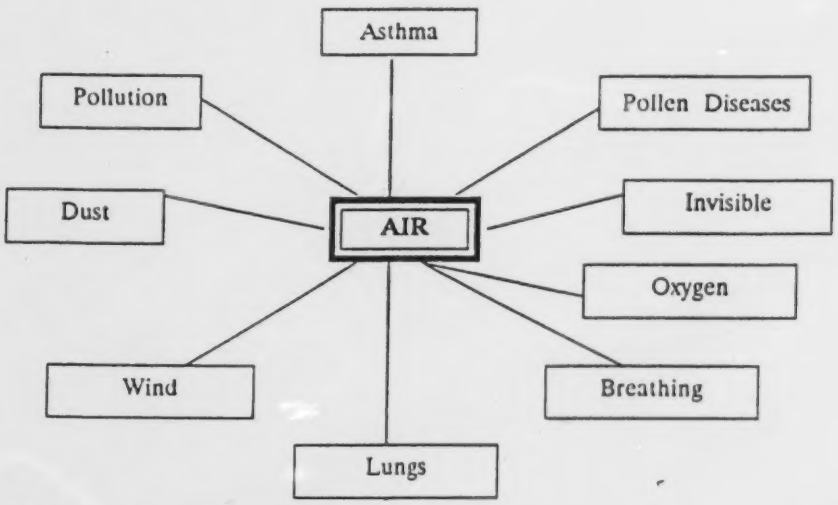


Fig. 1:03 : Brainstorming an Idea

What the children know about the topic?

What do they need to know?

Develop a lesson or series of lessons to facilitate their learning.

Discussion Webs

The Discussion Web could be used across the curriculum with different levels. For example, the following discussion web on energy could be used in varying levels of difficulty to discuss the effects of the Sun in producing energy on our planet.

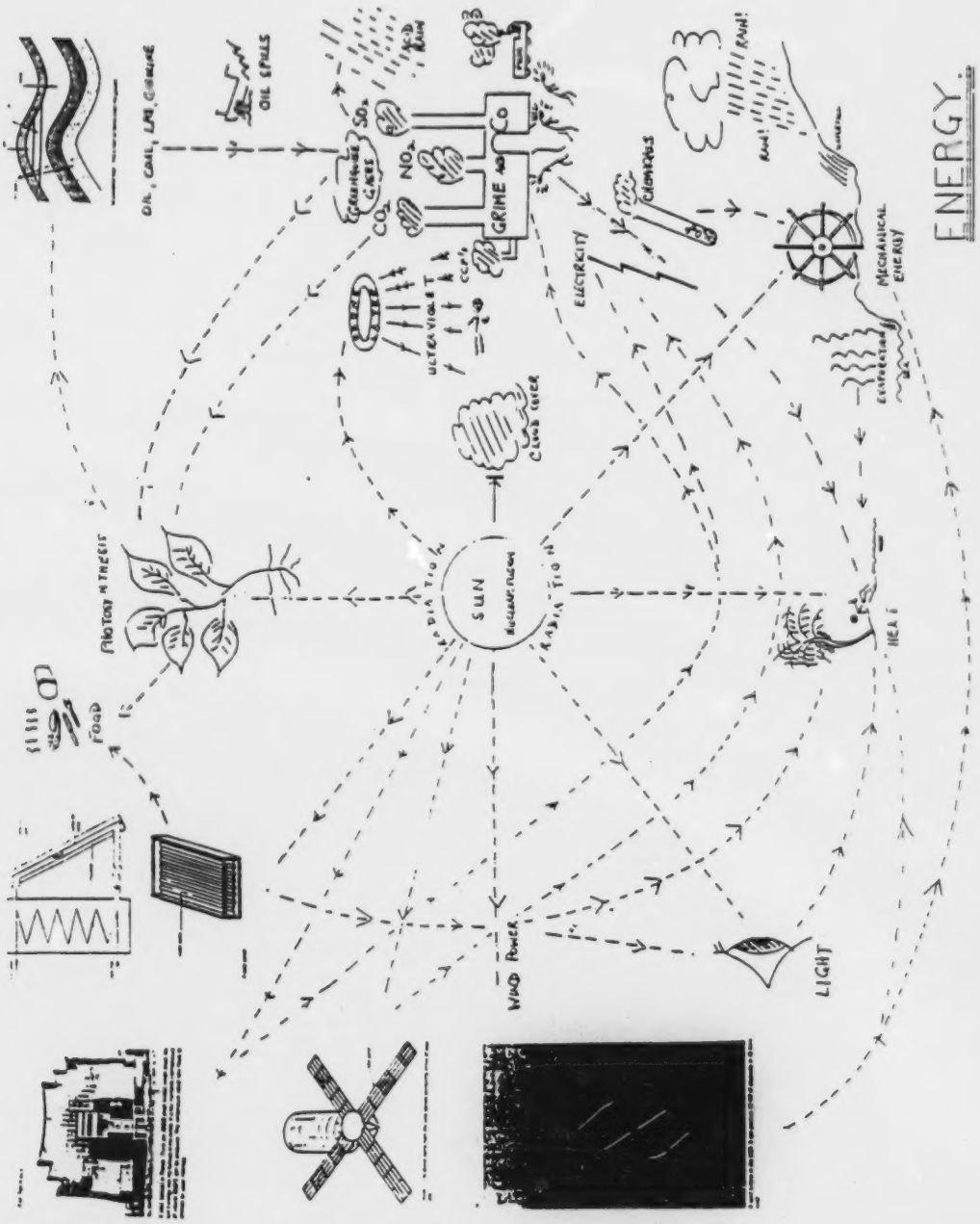


Fig. 1:04 : Discussion Web on Energy

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We could also use an alternative type of diagram to illustrate discussion webs.

Discussion Web Based on ----------

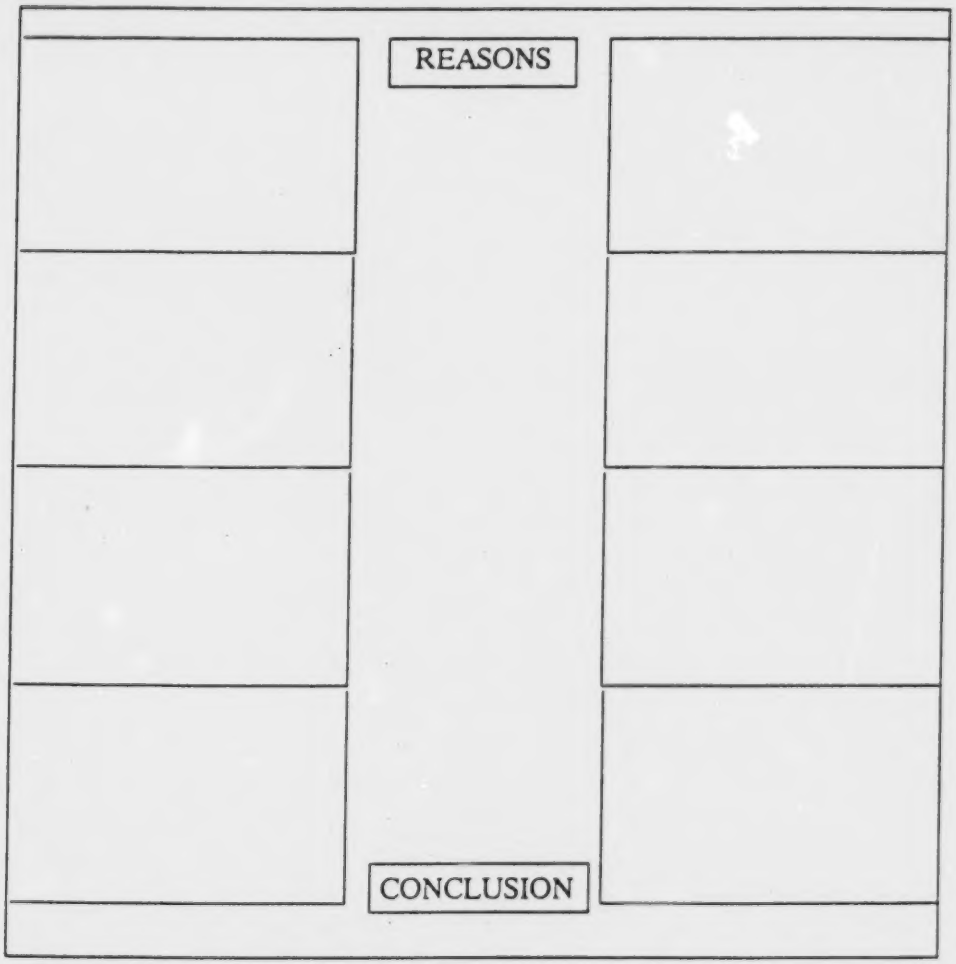


Fig. 1:05 : Discussion Web on Energy

Adaptations could be made in the Discussion Web by simply changing the classification scheme to forge an appropriate match between it and knowledge structures of a particular content area.

K-W-L Strategy

Definition and Characteristics

The following illustrates a strategy that helps children combine new information with prior knowledge to build concepts and vocabulary.

K	What I Know
W	What I Want to know
L	What I Learned.

This strategy includes opportunities for children to brainstorm, to preview vocabulary and concepts and to retell what they need.

The strategy also creates purposes for reading the assigned text.

Activity 1.4 - K-W-L Frame for a History Lesson on Caribs

K	W	L
What we know	What we want to know	What we learned and still need to learn

Caribs

1. Indians	Are Caribs the same as Arawaks? If not, how are they different?
2. Warlike	Where did they live? What did they eat?
3. Cannibals	How did they protect themselves?

PROJECT STRATEGIES

Preface

As teachers we often ask individual students, or groups of students to work on a project to be presented to the teacher or the class. This is both an important cognitive and affective learning strategy but requires a certain amount of individual and group organisational skills. Planning the project and drawing up a group contract are important strategies which teachers could use in this instance.

Activity 1.5 - Project Planning Across Subject Areas

OUTLINE

- What is the general topic of your project?
- Which aspects are you most interested in?

You probably can't cover everything - underline the aspect you are going to concentrate on for your project.

- Make up a title.
- What do you already know about your topic? - make some brief notes.

PLAN

- Look at the title you have chosen and what you already know. What else do you want to find out for your project?
- Write down some questions to help you find the information.

UNDERLINE THE MOST IMPORTANT WORDS OR PHRASES IN EACH QUESTION - THESE ARE THE KEY-WORDS FOR YOUR PROJECT.

CHECK

- Discuss what you have written with your teacher or other people in the class.
- If you have missed anything interesting add another question or questions to your plan now.

NOW YOU ARE READY TO BEGIN YOUR SEARCH FOR INFORMATION.

Based on:

Williams, D.A. and Herring, J.E. Keywords and Learning. RGIT, SLIS, 1987.

Activity 1.6 - Group Contract Sample Form

1. **Title of Project**

2. **Group Members**

1. Emma	4.
2.	5.
3.	6.

3. **Our Responsibilities**

1. Emma will
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

4. **How are we going to present our work?**

   Pictures from magazines, newspapers, etc; drawings, writing, diagrams, photographs, overhead projectors, speaking, using tape recordings, video, drama, wall display, booklets.

5. **Signed by:**

1.	4.
2.	5.
3.	6.

Teacher:	**Date:**

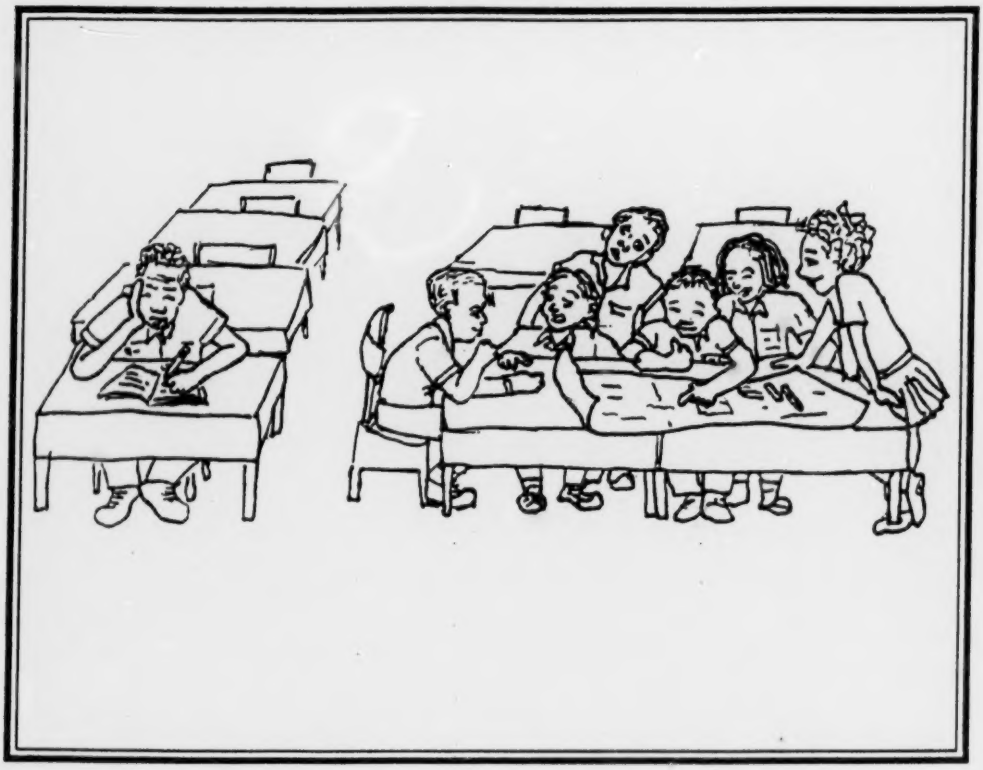
SUMMARY

If we are to encourage students to be critical thinkers and act on what they know rather than only react to what we tell them, then we should consider the foundations of cognitive psychology as well as behaviourist psychology. Mind mapping, brain storming and webbing has its roots in cognitive psychology which concerns itself with how we know things. As you recall from your education or psychology classes at your college or university, behaviouralism merely focuses on reactions to stimuli created by someone else.

As you saw with the K-W-L strategy, the onus for learning is placed on the student as learner and the teacher as guide or facilitator. By helping students investigate and organise ideas, we are dealing with meta cognition and higher level thinking skills not just the memorisation and recitation of facts.

CHAPTER 2

STUDY SKILLS



Contents:

- Introduction
- Finding Information
- Organising Information
- Preparing for Exams
- Summary

2. STUDY SKILLS

INTRODUCTION

FINDING INFORMATION

- **Using a Textbook**

  Activity 2.1 - My Friend the Textbook
- **Library and Information Skills**

  Locational Skills

  Alphabetical Skills

  Numerical Skills

  Activity 2.2 - Number Sequencing and Title Organisation
- **Research Skills**

  Retrieving Information

  Search Strategies

  Evaluating Information

  Bibliographies
- **Setting Assignments**

  Activity 2.3 - Researching Carnival
- **Skimming**

  Activity 2.4 - Teaching Skimming Skills

ORGANISING INFORMATION

- **Outlining**

  Activity 2.5 - Hawaii is filled with many wonders
- **Semantic Mapping**

  Activity 2.6 - Musical Instruments

PREPARING FOR EXAMS : Some Suggestions for Student Success

- During the Course
- A Review Timetable
- The Environment During Revision

- **Active Revision Strategies**

  Memory Aids

  Introduction

  Activity 2.7 - Bizzare Associations Enhance Memory

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- **Summaries**

  Introduction - Passive (textual) vs Active (graphic)

  Summaries

  Activity 2.8 - A Textual Summary vs a Graphic Summary for Biology.
- **The Examination**

SUMMARY

2. STUDY SKILLS

INTRODUCTION

The dictionary define the word study as 'a thorough enquiry into a particular subject'.

This chapter deals with ways to encourage children to become more effective and independent **students** by:

- Finding information.
- Organising information.
- Preparing for exams.

FINDING INFORMATION

Researchers need to ask the following nine questions during the research process.

1. What do I need to do?
   (formulate and analyse need)
2. Where can I go?
   (identify and appraise likely sources)
3. How do I get the information?
   (trace and locate resources)
4. Which resources shall I use?
   (examine, select and reject individual resources)
5. How shall I use the resources?
   (interrogate resources)
6. What should I make a record of?
   (recording and sorting information)
7. Have I got the information I need?
   (interpreting, analysing, synthesising, evaluating)
8. How should I present it?
   (presenting, communicating)
9. What have I achieved?
   (evaluation)

Using a Textbook

Do not assume that the student understands how to use a textbook. Explain the features of a textbook and why they are there. The worksheet 'My friend the Textbook' is a guide to the features in a textbook that students need to know and could also be adapted as a worksheet for your students to use.

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Activity 2.1 - My Friend the Textbook

My first six months
as a V.S.O.

by

I.M.D. Ranged

Title Page:

It is surprising how many students do not know the titles of their textbooks or the authors' names. It may not seem important, but since you are going to put confidence in the authors and their books, it may be worthwhile to know their names, who they are, where they come from and what they have done in the field. This is essential of course, if you must prepare footnotes or a bibliography.

Preface or Forward:

In the preface (sometimes called a forward or introduction) the author explores the purpose, organisation, method of presentation, and whatever particular features of the book you should especially notice. Frequently in textbooks there is a section at the beginning entitled 'To the Student'. Read it carefully. The author is explaining how to get the most out of the book. Textbooks are very expensive; you should try to get your money's worth.

Preface

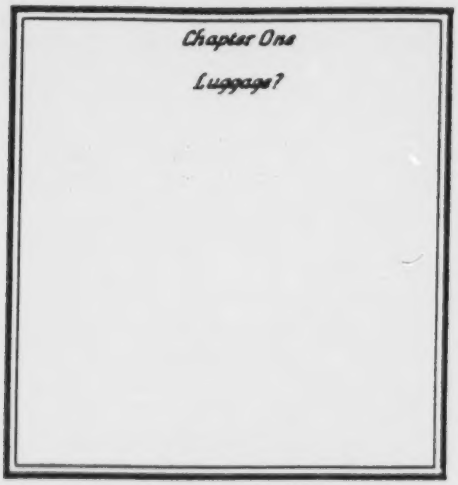
The purpose of this book is to set out, in chronological order, the multitudinous mistakes, eternal errors and constant cock-ups that I made in my first six months.

Contents

	Page
1. *L.I.A.T. Where's my Luggage*	5
2. *School Life - sadism and insomnia*	24
3. *Peace Corps - the real culture shock*	38
4. *Development work and the hotel swimming pool*	57
5. *Alcohol as an aid to celibacy.*	71

Table of Contents:

Skim through the table of contents to get an overall view of the material in the book. Some tables of contents are actually outlines, with subtopics of each chapter. This section of the text is the fastest, easiest way to survey the territory over which you will travel.



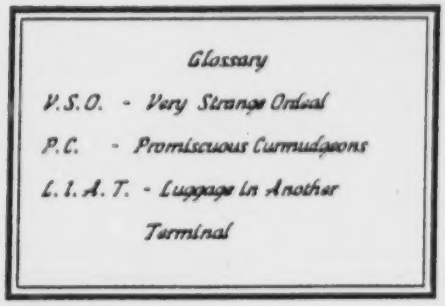
The Text:

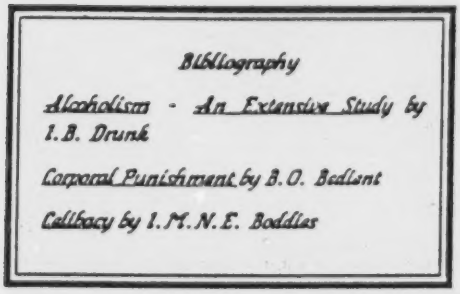
The chapters of most textbooks include a variety of study guides. Section heads in boldface type, announce the general subject of the material that follows.

Frequently you will find summaries at the end of each chapter, often with thought questions and exercises. Many texts contain maps, charts, diagrams and tables. Don't ignore them. They have been included to help you visualize the information. They are valuable aids to understanding. Know how to read them, and read them.

Glossary:

Many textbooks include a glossary, either at the end of each chapter or at the end of the book. This is a kind of dictionary which defines or explains some of the technical terms in the book and often provides examples and page references.



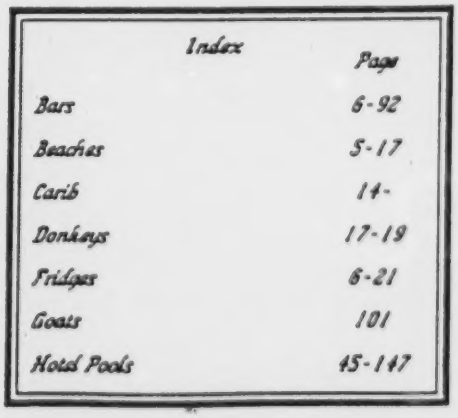


Bibliography:

An alphabetical list of relevant books and articles is frequently included either at the end of each chapter or at the end of the book. If you want further information on the subject, or if you want to know the author's sources, the bibliography will list them by author, title, publisher and date.

Index:

One of the most important sections of any textbook is the index at the end. This is usually a thorough, fairly detailed alphabetical listing of all the major persons, places, ideas, facts or topics that the book contains, with page references. For review or for quickly locating some point you wish to check, the index is a valuable guide.



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Library and Information Skills

Locational Skills

Students should know how to find their way around a library. They should understand the vocabulary of libraries e.g. fiction, nonfiction, biography, catalogue, reference, periodical ... etc.

Some activities
- 1) Draw a plan of the library
- 2) Write a guide for using the library
- 3) An A - Z dictionary of library terminology

Alphabetical Skills

Used in
- sequence of authors
- using dictionaries
- using encyclopaedias
- index of a book
- card catalogue

There are a multitude of exercises and games that reinforce alphabetical order e.g. re-arranging word lists.

Numerical Skills

The Dewey System is arranged by subject from general to specific.

Activity 2.2 - Number Sequencing and Title Organisation

Put these titles into two subject groups and arrange each group from general to specific.

Alyphatic Compounds
The Caribbean 1745 - 1890
Science for All
1973 - The Caribbean Community
Organic Chemistry
World History.

Research Skills

Retrieving Information

Many students are unable to do this effectively because they cannot analyse the skills they need to find the information. How well do your students know how to:

identify main subject and subtopics?

define key words/search terms?

use alternative or related words/terms?

Search Strategies

This involves going beyond the book title. Encourage the student to use catalogues, indexes, content pages ... etc.

Evaluating Information

Students should be encouraged to assess the suitability of their sources. For example, younger students should be encouraged to use encyclopaedias at their level.

Bibliographies

Many S.B.A. students have to write bibliographies. This skill should be taught at an early stage, at a simpler level. Encourage younger students to make a note of the textbooks they use - the author, title, publisher etc.

Author ↓	Title ↓	Place of Publication ↓
Atwood, Margaret	Cat's Eye	Great Britain
Virago Press	1990	10 - 42
↑ PUBLISHER	↑ YEAR OF PUBLICATION	↑ PAGES REFERRED TO

Setting Assignments

When attempting exercises, assignments or activities that incorporate information/library skills, you must consider:

1. - the target group
2. - information skills the students have
3. - resources that you need
4. - skills the students will develop
5. - how the activity will be evaluated.

Now its your turn.

Activity 2.3 - Researching Carnival

Find three countries that celebrate Carnival. Research how carnival originated and how the celebrations have changed.

1. **Target Group:** Class 5 (Primary/Secondary Transition class)

2. **Information Skills the Students have:**

   Using a dictionary

   Using an encyclopaedia

   Using a table of contents.

3. **Resources:** Newspapers, Caribbean books, magazines, human resources, dictionaries, encyclopaedias.

4. **Skills the Students will Develop:**
   - improve skills students already have
   - looking at resources other than books (e.g. newspapers, magazines, people)
   - using an index
   - skimming
   - using a dictionary along with an encyclopaedia
   - how to ask questions effectively.

5. **How the Activity will be Evaluated:**

Resources	*Yes*	*How?*
Dictionary	√	———
Human Resources	√	———
Encyclopedias	√	———
Caribbean Books	√	———
Newspapers	√	-----
Magazines	√	-----

Using a checklist the students will assess the resources they used and how they used them. This is a good way of introducing the concept of a bibliography.

Checklist:

Investigate with the students if the initial assignment was complete.

Present the project.

Skimming

Skimming is an important skill when finding information.

Activity 2.4 - Teaching Skimming Skills

Define what skimming is and how one does it.

Here is a useful and enjoyable skimming activity. You should be able to answer each question in 5 seconds.

1. Question: **When was Amenemhet III Pharaoh of Egypt?**

   Petrie first dug into the pyramids at Giza in 1880 and then went on in 1889 to a pyramid near the Nile. Here he came upon the burial place of Amenemhet III, one of the great Pharaohs of Egypt around 1800 B.C. The discovery was important in itself, but it also led Petrie to devise a system of classifying and grouping archaeological finds which is still used.

2. Question: **Why did Magellan give the name "Pacific" to the Pacific Ocean?**

   The Pacific Ocean is a little less than twice the size of the Atlantic Ocean, covering more of the earth than all of the continents combined. Between the Philippines and Panama, the ocean is more than 10,000 miles wide. In some places it is more than 6 miles deep. This ocean was named by the Portuguese explorer, Ferdinand Magellan, who led the first expedition around the world. In 1519, when he first saw the ocean, he called it "Pacific" because it was so smooth and calm compared to the stormy Atlantic which he had just crossed.

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ORGANISING INFORMATION

Outlining

Outlining, a means of organising and prioritising information gained from a text, is a useful way of helping students become more effective readers, writers, notemakers and reviewers.

Here is an outlining activity.

Activity 2.5 - Hawaii is Filled with Many Wonders

The mountains are among the loveliest in the world.

The pleasant climate is caused by the northeast trade wind.

Flowers, such as orchids, are surprisingly easy to grow.

The mountains are high and forested, with many waterfalls.

Third, there are the flowers.

The average temperature is 77°.

The population is made up of Caucasians, Japanese, Filipinos, Chinese, Puerto Ricans, Koreans, and Hawaiians.

First, there is the climate.

The mountains are close to the ocean.

The highest temperature ever recorded is 88°.

Finally, there are the people.

The hibiscus flowers bloom in at least twenty colours.

Second, there are the mountains.

These people live together in reasonable harmony.

HAWAII IS FILLED WITH MANY WONDERS

I. ----------

A. ----------

B. ----------

C. ----------

II. ----------

A. ----------

B. ----------

C. ----------

34

III. ----------

A. ----------

B. ----------

IV. ----------

A. ----------

B. ----------

Graphic organisers, semantic maps, webs, networks, flowcharts are all ways of re-representing text in a visual form.

Semantic Mapping

Activity 2.6 - Musical Instruments

There are many different kinds of musical instruments. They are divided into three main classes according to the way that they are played. For example, some instruments are played by blowing air into them. These are called wind instruments. In some of these the air is made to vibrate inside a wooden tube, and these are said to be of the woodwind family. Examples of woodwind instruments are the flute, the clarinet and the bassoon. Other instruments are made of brass; the trumpet and the horn, for example. There are also various other wind instruments such as the mouth-organ and the bag-pipes.

Some instruments are played by banging or striking them. One obvious example is the drum, of which there are various kinds. Instruments like this are called percussion instruments.

The last big group of musical instruments are the ones which have strings. There are two main kinds of stringed instruments: those in which the music is made by plucking the strings, and those where the player draws a bow across the strings. Examples of the former are the harp and the guitar. Examples of the latter are the violin and the cello.

Produce a poster that illustrates the major points of the above information on musical instruments.

PREPARING FOR EXAMS : Some Suggestions for Student Success

This section mentions practical suggestions to students on how to approach their revision. It also explains various memory aids that could be chosen when revising. The differences between textured and graphic summaries are also discussed.

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The appendix at the end of the manual includes some other interesting activities related to what process exam questions can ask the students to carry out. Three important activities related to timing, relevancy and assessment of examination questions, are also included in the appendix.

During the Course:

Review your notes periodically throughout the course and

Summarise your notes.

A Revision Timetable

You will need to draw up a timetable for:

all the different subjects and

all the different topics.

The Environment During Revision:

- make sure you are comfortable
- make sure you have everything you need
- revise at the same time and on the same days
- take regular breaks - stop when you are tired
- take a rest day.

Active Revision Strategies:

Whilst revising your brain needs to be ACTIVE. **Don't just read through your notes.**

Some suggestions:

- work in study groups with other students
- use pictures, diagrams, maps - put them on your bedroom wall
- use mnemonics
- use audio tapes - particularly if you are preparing for language oral exams
- start each session with a review
- rewrite your notes and redraw your diagrams
- do past questions under exam conditions, correct them and do them again.

Memory Aids

Preface

Memory seems to be a very playful thing that delights in the ludicrous and absurd and becomes easily bored with the mundane.

Activity 2.7 - Bizarre Associations Enhance Memory

Spend a minute trying to memorise the following list of numbers and corresponding objects.

1.	-	tree	6.	-	window
2.	-	boy	7.	-	bread
3.	-	bucket	8.	-	money
4.	-	white	9.	-	red
5.	-	sock	10.	-	T.V.

The memory functions best at the beginning, the end and on the unusual.

Let us focus on the unusual and try again.

Most psychologists now place great stock in association as a method of assessing the mind. We will use this too. Each digit resembles the object next to it:

1.	-	pen	6.	-	golf club
2.	-	swan	7.	-	cliff
3.	-	breasts (!)	8.	-	spectacles
4.	-	sailboat	9.	-	ladle
5.	-	book	10.	-	bat and ball

Spend a minute memorising these.

Now think up a story, the more personal and bizarre the better, linking objects of the second group to its respective first group partner.

Now test yourself on remembering the first group again:

1.	6.
2.	7.
3.	8.
4.	9.
5.	10.

10 out of 10? Good.

So memory is enhanced by association, more so by bizarre association.

Summaries

Preface: Passive (textual) vs Active (graphic) Summaries

Passive revising is a waste of time. To retain anything one needs to absorb and then transmit knowledge i.e. actively summarise.

Conventional summaries can be wordy (thus not much better than the notes they came from) or scanty (leaving out vital information).

Activity 2.8 - A Textual Summary vs A Graphic Summary in Biology.

A Textual Summary

Physiological Effects of Adrenaline (Epinephrine) in Humans

In respect to danger, adrenaline:

1. - speeds the heartbeat
2. - diverts blood from gut and skin to muscles
3. - thus "hollow stomach" and pale face (in Europeans)
4. - causes liver to secrete sugar
5. - speeds up breathing and metabolism
6. - speeds up blood clotting
7. - dilates pupils
8. - tenses muscles
9. - stops saliva flowing.

Quite a list, and it already relies on a great deal of my previous understanding of the text (a typewritten page).

It can be made more accessible (to the right brain) by drawing, colour and even .... humour!

One drawing has been compiled (Fig. 02:01) for all nine effects, but they could have been done in separate sketches.

Fig. 02: 01

This is a good homework exercise (once students get the idea).

The Examination

- get enough sleep the night before
- check the time and place
- be prepared (pens, pencils etc)
- divide your time for the answers according to the marks
- don't brood, especially if another exam is coming up!

SUMMARY

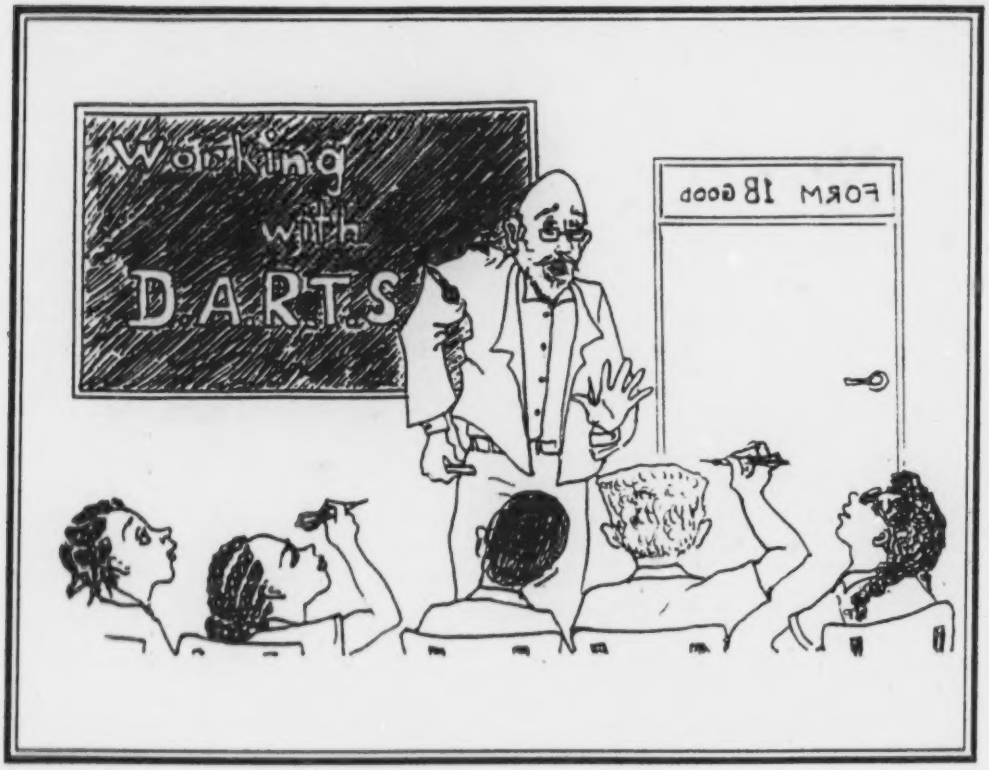
In this chapter we have looked at how teachers can assist students to find information, organise it and then summarise and remember it for examination purposes.

Suggestions and examples regarding using a textbook, acquiring library and information processing skills and conducting effective research were all discussed. Two different strategies regarding organising the material were highlighted. The chapter concluded with a section on preparing for examinations both during and after the course. The use of memory aides and summarising devices were also explained.

The chapter contains at least eight activities which teachers could use in their various classrooms. Unfortunately VSO was unable to print all the excellent material shared by teachers at the various workshops held in the Caribbean.

CHAPTER 3

WORKING WITH TEXTS: USING DARTS



Contents:

- Introduction
- Promoting Reading Comprehension
- Aims and Objectives of the Darts System
- Points to Consider when Selecting Texts for Darts Activities
- Activities on Texts
- Eight Sample Activities for the Classroom
- Summary

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3. WORKING WITH TEXTS: USING DARTS

INTRODUCTION

- Alternative Approaches to Comprehension : The Darts System
- The Purpose of Darts

PROMOTING READING COMPREHENSION

- Pre-Reading
- Reading
- Post Reading

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE DARTS SYSTEM

- Aims
- Objectives

POINTS TO CONSIDER WHEN SELECTING TEXTS FOR DARTS ACTIVITIES

- Intended Use
- Appearance
- Ideas
- Organisation
- Language
- Overall Impact

ACTIVITIES ON TEXTS

- Complete it
- Compare it
- Re-form it
- Dispute it

EIGHT SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR THE CLASSROOM

The Value of Underlining

- Activity 3.1 : Environmental Trouble

Deducing Word Meaning in Context

- Activity 3.2 : Six Word Meaning

Alternative Representation

- Activity 3.3 : Hard Times for Farmer
- Activity 3.4 : Sedimentary Rocks

Sequencing

- Activity 3.5 : Tea

Disputing the Text : Science

- Activity 3.6 : Acid Rain

Revisions : Science

- Activity 3.7 : Solids/Liquids/Gases

Using a Text with Students

- Activity 3.8 : Energy - A Lesson Plan

SUMMARY

3. WORKING WITH TEXTS : USING DARTS

INTRODUCTION

Alternative Approaches to Comprehension - The Darts System

Although most schools compartmentalise learning according to subject areas, there are common strategies for teaching subject content across the curriculum. One of the main activities employed by teachers across the world is using text, often from a text book which students own or use.

This section aims to show how text can be adapted using a variety of techniques. These techniques are intended to make text activities more interactive and stimulating for students and to encourage more selfdirected learning. The acronym used for such materials is **DARTS,** which stands for **D**irected **A**ctivities **R**elated to **T**ext**S.** It is by no means a new idea, but we believe that both the theory and examples presented will be helpful for all teachers, especially those who are untrained.

Learning from text is furthered by REFLECTION at critical points in the text. We suggest that specific rather than general instructions must be given to students:

General Instructions :	**e.g.**	'Read and make notes'
		'Read and select the main points.'
Specific Instructions :	**e.g.**	'Underline all the words referring to the female parts of the flow'.
		'Find and draw a ring around all the.....'

The Purpose of Darts

This helps students feel their way into the structure of different texts. These skills will then, hopefully, be retained and transferred to a variety of situations during future studies. DARTS are therefore designed to get students to :

1. Find information and think about it
2. Categorise information
3. Record information in a variety of ways.

PROMOTING READING COMPREHENSION

Strategies designed to promote reading comprehension should take into account a three-stage instructional process:

- Pre-reading
- Reading
- Post-reading

Pre-reading - Tapping before reading/targeting the point.

Students should approach the task by:

- surveying, brain-storming, mapping activity
- previewing the selected material
- briefly studying the title, author, introductory paragraph, major headings, illustrations and concluding paragraphs
- predicting the topic of the selection, brainstorming words that come to mind and organising those words in a semantic map to highlight relationships.

Reading - Tapping the main idea.

Students find the main idea by asking questions such as:

- what is the author really trying to say?
- what clues in the text hint at the point he/she is trying to make?
- is my anticipated main point the actual point?
- does the author change or expand upon the main point as the selection develops?

Students track the main ideas whilst reading by:

- anticipating the main idea of a selection
- uncovering additional data whilst reading
- modifying the anticipated main idea
- uncovering more data through reading
- modifying the data again
- uncovering more data to complete the selection
- developing the ultimate main idea.

Post-reading - Tapping after reading (i.e. thinking about the point).

The Students:

- think about the main ideas of the text
- clarify the main point or points by referring back to the semantic map to see if the details support the main point or points constructed
- identify additional information implicit in the text
- comment critically upon the main points which they have uncovered in the text.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE DARTS SYSTEM

The aims and objectives below may be obtained using the theories and examples presented in this section.

Aims

* to enable the student to use a variety of techniques
* to make learning an active personal experience
* to promote initiative, independence and ownership.

Objectives

* to collect information
* to collate information
* to classify/tabulate information
* to identify ideas and sequences
* to compare and contrast information
* to explore alternative solutions
* to ask questions
* to re-order ideas and information
* to record information in a variety of ways
* to use evidence in a creative way
* to identify difficulties
* to recognise bias
* to observe carefully
* to interpret and extrapolate

* to re-shape information
* to make useful personal notes
* to talk together constructively
* to make decisions
* to acquire self-confidence.

POINTS TO CONSIDER WHEN SELECTING TEXTS FOR DARTS ACTIVITIES

- **The Intended Use**

  Is the material going to be used in a supported or unsupported reading situation? At home or at school?

  Will it be used to introduce the topic before the lesson fills things out? Or to summarise and focus what has already been presented in the lesson? Or to be the main source of information and instruction in itself? Is the material properly suited to the use you intend for it?

- **The Appearance**

  Is the look of the page inviting - an automatic switch-on? Or might it appear daunting and aversive, especially to a poor reader or someone not interested in your subject?

  Is the print face too small (or, less likely, too large)? Is the density of the print off-putting? Has the printing been clearly done?

  Is the balance and the relationship between illustration and text right?

  Are the illustrations of the right kind and quality? Will the reader you have in mind be likely to find them useful - or perhaps distracting or alienating? If they are attractive, do they also make their point with clarity? What do they tell the reader about the way the writer regards him/her?

- **The Ideas**

  Is the information presented here accurate and adequate? Does the information given properly reflect the involvement of women as well as men in this matter? Does it offer an appropriate international and multi-ethnic perspective?

  How 'familiar' is the bulk of the material likely to be and where it is new, how easily is it likely to mesh with what the pupil already knows?

  How abstract and arcane is the information or how concrete and close to the reader's experience? If the text is meant to take the reader beyond his/her current experience, are useful bridges to the new world provided?

  How dense is the argument and how frequent the arrival of new ideas? How many in an average paragraph, for example?

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- **The Organisation**

  Has the passage a proper coherence or is it just a series of separate gobbets of information?

  Has the 'argument' or presentation of ideas been properly shaped and clearly signposted? Is the underlying structure accessible?

  Is it possible to find your way around in the text with ease and certainty? In particular is there intelligent use of paragraphing, headings, variations in type face, underlinings and so on?

  If it is a book, are there adequate 'route-finding' facilities (table of contents? index? running section titles? chapter summaries?)?

  If there are activities included in the text are these labelled? Can they be accomplished on the spot or do they call for the reader to break off from the text? Is the explanation of them straightforward and the purpose of them clear? Will these activities make sense to the reader you have in mind? Could you do them? Would you want to?

- **The Language**

  Does the text speak in a register familiar to the pupil? Does it address him/her personally in everyday language or does it present the topic in the 'official' subject style? Are there special conventions in the way the information is presented in this type of writing? How will this affect the pupil's chances of getting to grips with the content?

  How frequent and how necessary are the technical terms that occur? How is their potential difficulty mediated (understanding left to chance? glossary provided? natural definitions built into the running text?)?

  Is the syntax and sentence structure complex or straightforward? How frequently are ideas 'embedded' in one another by use of subordinate clauses and so on? Will this be confusing to the readers you have in mind?

- **The Overall Impact**

  Would you want to read a book or passage like this if you weren't already a devotee of the subject and if someone else was calling the tune?

  If the text is simple is it really worth the reader's bother to tackle it at all? Might something more demanding actually be easier to read?

  If the text is demanding, is it also sufficiently compelling for the reader to want to get to grips with it and sufficiently helpful for the reader to feel sustained during the struggle to assimilate it?

  What is the overall impression likely to be given to the reader about the kind of person for whom this book was meant? Is it aware of you and interested in you if you are female? Is it aware of you and interested in you if you are black? How will the reader respond to the implications here?

ACTIVITIES ON TEXTS

Complete it

These activities use a text which has been doctored so as to be incomplete in some way, with the pupils being asked to reconstruct the whole text from what they are given. There are two ways of setting this up.

1) **Deleting parts of a text for pupils to replace.**

The deletions might be:

(a) single words

(b) longer sections

(c) titles and sub-headings

(d) parts of the text where an accompanying diagram/illustration has been left intact (or vice versa).

In any of these cases pupils can be left to decide their own replacements or, alternatively, given a choice of bits to fill the gaps (perhaps more bits than are needed or with a few rogue possibilities included).

2) **Providing parts of a text with which pupils can build a working text of their own.**

Here the original text is made more radically incomplete; it might be offered for 'assemply' in these forms:

(a) cut up into sections for pupils to re-sequence

(b) as a skeleton of headings, sub-headings and a few key statements, with pupils asked to flesh it out in some way

(c) the complete text provided up to a given point, with the pupils then asked to hypothesize what they think might follow, given what they've read

(d) a small key section as a 'first bite' (not necessarily from the opening of the text), with the pupils asked to read it and then speculate on what might be expected to go around it as a preparation, extension, balance, etc.

Compare it

In these activities extras are privided to go along with the text and the pupils are asked to compare and relate the text and the extras in some way.

1. **The extras might be:**

(a) simply additional texts on the same subject, with pupils asked to mark up and comment on what they see as the important similarities and differences between the versions

(b) in the form of prefabricated but as yet unassembled parts of a flow-diagram, a tabulation, a set of notes or a paraphrase which pupils are asked to put together into a version that squares with (or even extends and develops) the original (which is also given).

Re-Form it

In these activities pupils are encouraged to represent what they have learned from reading the text in ways which help them make it their own. All the actitities here might involve pupils in underlining and labelling sections of the text in some way as a preliminary.

1) **Orally, pupils could be invited to:**

(a) improvise a 'talk through' of the information to a partner or small group (perhaps with support from brief notes, a flow diagram, etc.) dealing with questions both on the way through and at the end

(b) offer a more formalised lecturette version of the above with appropriate aids or apparatus and handling a formal question time at the end

(c) take part in a role-play simulation or sketch which draws on the ideas and information in the text.

2) **Using drawings and visuals, pupils might design:**

(a) annotated doodles (i.e. simple representational pictures plus captions)

(b) an abstract 'model' which represents the ideas in a diagrammatic form

(c) a tabulation, chart or graph

(d) a flow-diagram or critical-path analysis.

3) **In writing, pupils might be asked to make:**

(a) linear notes (i.e. traditionally organised jottings with headings, numbered sub-sections, etc.)

(b) patterned notes (i.e. notes done as a network showing the connections between ideas)

(c) a summary (plus response), in which they give their own shortened and reorganised account of what the writer said (and what they think of it)

(d) a re-write of the information for a specified audience (possibly younger, and preferably real and available

(e) a parody of the writer's ideas in a way that implies a comment or indicates a grasp of the communicative rituals involved.

4. Dispute it

These activities involve pupils in interrogating the text and evaluating what it has to say.

Pupils could be asked to:

(1) **set their own questions on the text -** questions which they would like others to consider, either because they don't know the answer at all or because they want to compare their own possible answers with those offered by other pupils

(2) **respond to a series of statements** compiled by the teacher which re- present a range of (possibly conflicting) views about the text - the statements might be sorted into categories (agree/disagree/don't understand) or arranged into an order of priority

(3) **examine an apparently 'finished' text** but one in which imperfections still exist (or have been introduced), looking for and marking up in some way mistakes, inconsistencies, non-sequiturs, etc. - in other words, they are invited to treat the text as a first draft and try to put it right.

EIGHT SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR THE CLASSROOM

The Value of Underlining

This is one of the most popular comprehension aids used by readers. Now that teachers can legally photocopy small portions of a text for students, underlining can be used as an activity in its own right or as the basis for future activities. Examine the following sample entitled 'Environmental Trouble'. (Activity 3.1).

Activity 3.1 - Environmental Trouble

St. Lucia is a small island that only has a population of 140,000 but the problems here are serious. In the last 25 to 30 years we have lost 25% of our rainforest and our deep, clean, fast-flowing rivers have changed into muddy trickles. Some of them have completely disappeared.

Once, most rivers and lakes were clean and safe reservoirs for drinking water. Now many of them are polluted with human waste, factory waste, agricultural chemicals, or soil washed away by bad land use. All of these are dangerous, some of them can kill!

St. Lucia is a volcanic island and the steep hillsides cause rainwater to run off very quickly. Where ridges and slopes are covered with trees this action is

slowed down. The leaves break up the raindrops allowing them to filter through much more gently to the ground below. The trees also protect the earth, keeping it moist so that it absorbs the rain more easily. Once the earth is left bare the ground is dried by the wind and baked by the sun. Eventually it gets so hard that the rain cannot sink into it. It runs away instead, carrying all the loose particles of soil with it, silting up the rivers and washing into the sea.

It is not too late to protect what is left. Trees can be replanted on slopes that have been laid bare. Improved farming methods can be used to cut down on soil erosion. More efficient garbage disposal methods can be used.

(Adapted from 'Bush Talk')

Instructions

1. Read through the entire passage.
2. Underline the **main** problems in red ink.
3. Underline the suggested solutions in blue ink.
4. Copy the diagrams shown below, and then add labels which will compare the diagrams in relation to the problems of deforestation.

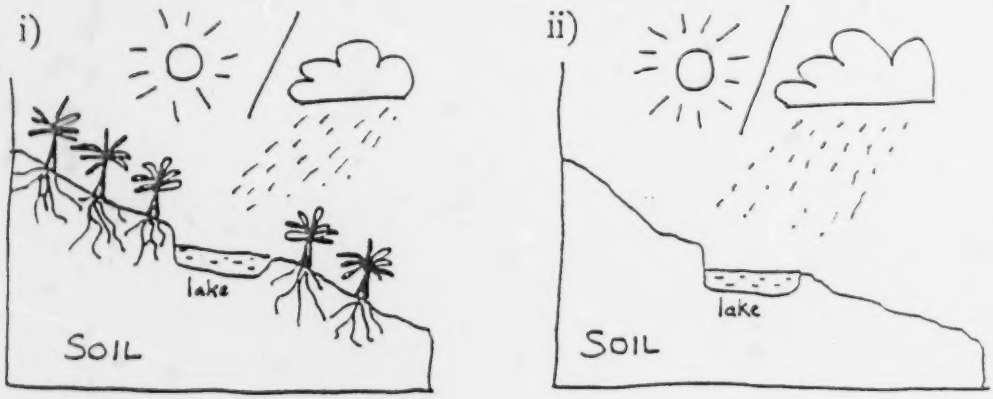

Fig. 03:01 : Environmental Trouble

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Deducing Word Meaning in Context

A second comprehension strategy involves predicting or guessing what a particular word might mean by examining all the other words around it. This skill involving synonyms helps students deduce word meaning in context. Consider the following activity entitled 'Six Word Meaning'. Activity 3.2.

Activity 3.2 - Six Word Meaning - Deducing Word Meaning in Context

It is often possible to guess the meaning of a word from the context.

Do you know the meaning of any of these words? Tick any which you know.

expire	forfeit	bar	issue	nuisance	deface

Now read the text below. It contains the above words. Underline them and guess their meanings. Try to find a synonym for each word.

Library Regulations

1. Library users are requested not to smoke or talk loudly in the library, as to do so may cause a nuisance to others.
2. Any library user who is found defacing library books will be barred from the library and forfeit their library ticket.
3. All student library tickets expire on the final day of the academic year. New tickets will be issued on the following day to continuing students.

The dictionary definitions of the above six words are given below. Match each one to the correct word.

1. *v* [I] 1 (of something which lasts for a period of time) to come to an end; run out 2 *lit* to die
2. *n* 1 a person, thing, or situation that causes annoyance or inconvenience 2 *law* the use of a place or property in a way that causes public annoyance (esp. in the phrase Commit no nuisance, on a notice in a public place)
3. *v* [T] to have (something) taken away from one because some agreement or rule has been broken, or as a punishment, or as the result of some action - able *adj* - ˜ er *n*
4. *v* -rr- [T] 1 [(UP)] to close firmly with a bar - opposite unbar 2 [+ obj + *adv/prep*] to keep in or out by barring a door, gate, etc: 3 [often pass.] to prevent movement through or into; block 4 [(from)] a to prevent from entering; keep out b to forbid; PROHIBIT
5. *v* [T] to spoil the surface or appearance of, e.g. by writing or making marks - ment *n* [U]
6. *v* [T] 1 to produce (esp. something printed and/or official) 2 to give out or provide officially

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Read the following two sets of sentences, A and B. Each sentence contains a nonsense word (i.e. not a real word in English) in italics. Match the meaning of the six nonsense words in set A to the six nonsense words in set B. An example is given at the end of the activity.

Set A

1. The examination instructions *prumble* that dictionaries cannot be used.
2. You have to show your library books to the porter when you go out through the *niller*.
3. Most of the students managed to answer the first and second questions satisfactorily, but the third one *inpodded* everybody.
4. The half-year examinations are really intended for practice, and so the results are not very important. However, the finals are *stroddy*: if you fail them, you fail the whole course.
5. Robert did not really want to continue studying after he finished school, but his parents gradually *burbled* him into it.
6. Unfortunately many seminars produce little more than *prawly* discussion; it is the tutor's job to avoid this, and to ensure that the discussion follows a clear plan and purpose.

Set B

a. Many students are reluctant to say anything at all in seminar discussions, but a sensitive tutor can *truggle* most studeats to make some kind of contribution.

b. Making the right choice of subject for study is a *brucious* decision; one's future career may depend on it.

c. A new *amtrock* has been installed at the main door in order to count the number of people entering the building every day.

d. All projects must be handed in by the end of the month: that is what the college *ditters*.

e. It is no good working in a *stipful* way when you begin studying: you will never get anywhere. Decide on your objectives and work towards them.

f. If you find these problems easy to solve, move on to the next page: you will find something there that will *cronk* you.

Here are the six real words which have the meaning of the six pairs of nonsense words. Look them up in a dictionary and match them to the nonsense words used above.

stump coax stipulate turnstile desultory crucial

Example: prumble (A.1) = ditters (B.d) = stipulate (the real word).

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Alternative Representation

Asking students to consider textual meaning by using a diagram or flow chart is a third strategy to assist students with comprehension. Activities 3.3 'Hard Times for the Farmer' and Activity 3.4 'Sedimentary Rocks' illustrate how the strategy can be used to teach reading comprehension in Social Studies and Science.

Activity 3.3 - Hard Times for the Farmer

Another useful device which can be based on any of the previous DARTS is to ask pupils to represent the essential features of the text using a diagram or a flow-chart. Although this is a demanding activity, it can be taken on board by pupils if helped by teacher-made examples. The following example deals with a sub-section of the chapter on 'The Roaring Twenties' called 'Hard Times for the Farmer'. The flow diagram that follows was prepared by the teacher to help pupils get to grips with the key features of the passage after having read it.

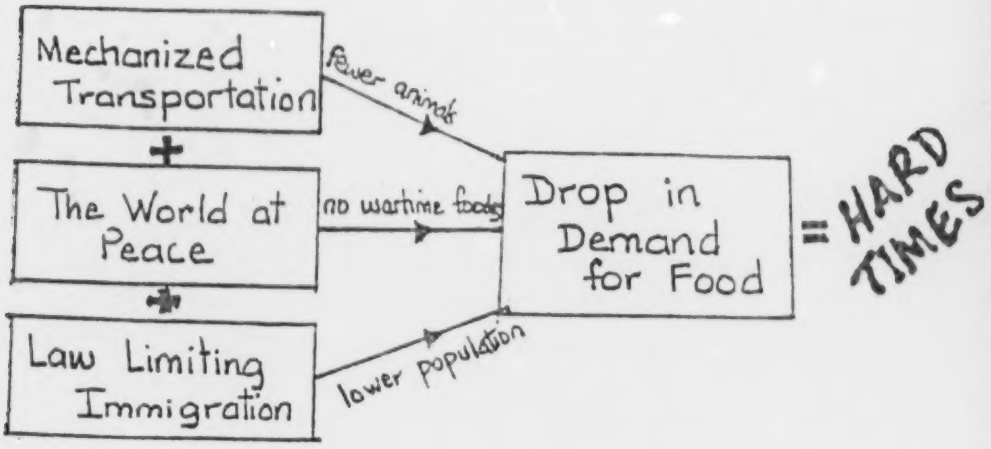

Fig. 03:02 : Hard Times for the Farmer

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Hard Times for the Farmer

The widespread intolerance and prejudice of the 1920s made it an unhappy time for Americans who wanted to change and improve their country. Another and more numerous dissatisfied group was the farmers. During the war years, while opposing armies had trampled the crops of Europeon farmers into the ground, American farmers had obtained high prices for their wheat and other food crops. By 1921, however, this had changed. The world was at peace and the countries of Europe no longer needed to buy such great quantities of food from the United States. At home, too, the farmer was finding it more difficult to sell his products. For one thing, the country's population was no longer increasing as quickly as before, partly because of the passing of a law in 1921 which limited the number of immigrants allowed to enter the United States. The boom in motor vehicles also hit the farmer, for as people stopped using horse-drawn vehicles the demand for animal feeding stuffs declined.

For these and other reasons more and more American farmers found themselves in difficulties in the 1920s. Large numbers of them lost money steadily, and by 1924 six hundred thousand of them were bankrupt. Members of Congress from farming areas persuaded the Government to try to help. It was made easier for farmers to borrow money to help them over their difficulties. A Farm Board was set up which bought crops like wheat and cotton, which the farmers could not otherwise have sold, with money from the Government. But despite these efforts to help the farmers, they found it more and more difficult to make ends meet. As American industry climbed steadily to ever higher peaks of prosperity, American farming slid with increasing speed into a deep state of depression.

Activity 3.4 - Sedimentary Rocks

Although rocks may not be soluble in water, nevertheless the wind, rain, and frost may break them up into smaller pieces. These are washed down by rivers and eventually reach the sea - maybe after many thousands of years - as mud, silt, and sand, which accumulate at the bottom of the sea, or in lakes. As the deposit gets thicker, the bottom part is squeezed more and more, and becomes a compact mass. Often the particles are actuallly cemented together through substances produced by chemical reactions. The shells of dead sea-organisms, which are made of calcium carbonate (or chalk), may form a layer on top of the mass, or at intervals between layers. Then the sea may have receded, or earth movements may have taken place, making the sea bed dry land. What was the sea-floor may now be hills or even mountain ranges. Rocks of this kind are called sedimentary rocks and include limestone, chalk, sandstone and shales.

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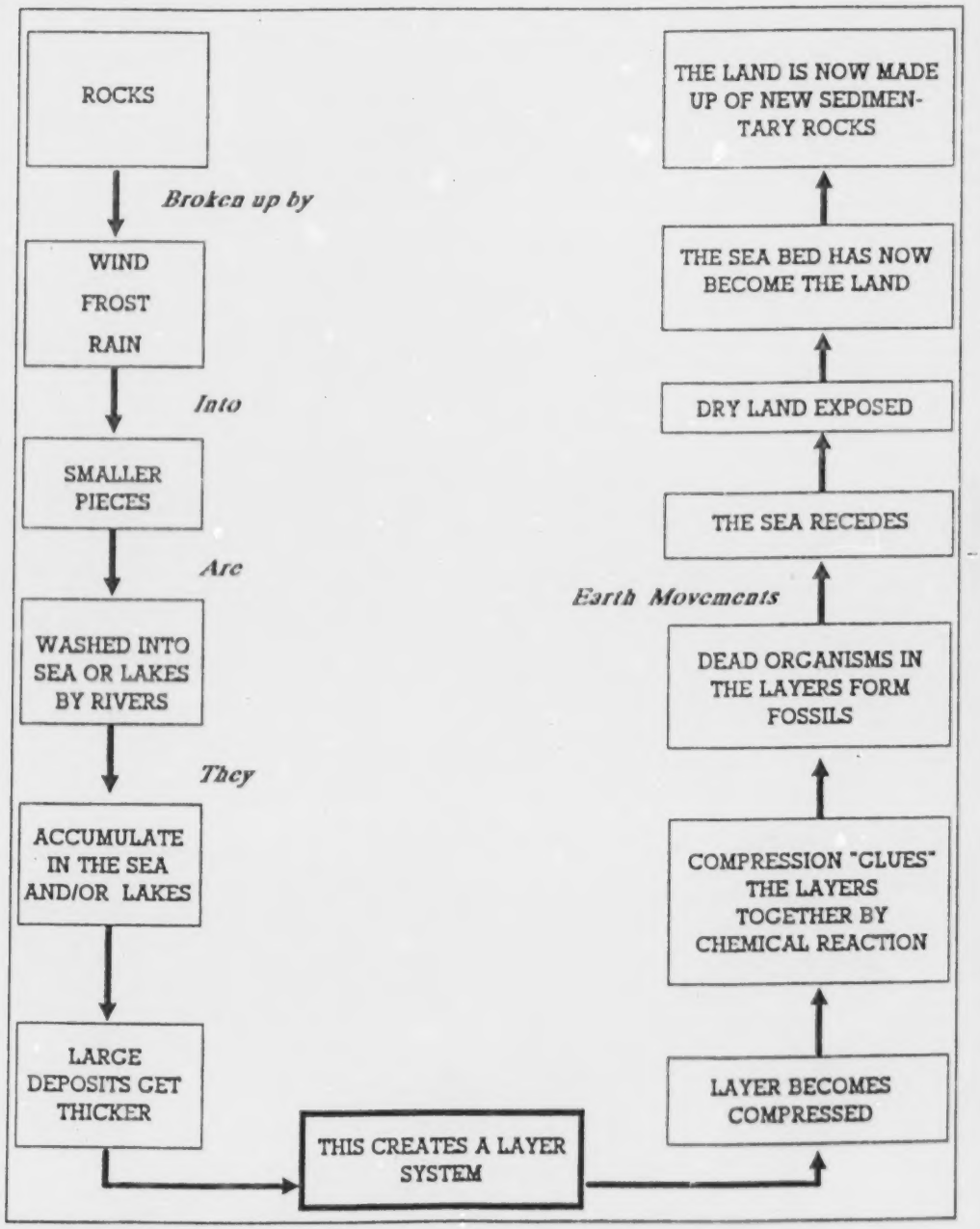
Instructions:

1. Thoroughly read the passage in the box.
2. Underline the stages and states that rock passes through.
3. Put the stages into a logical sequence.
4. Draw a flow-diagram to show the stages involved in breaking down of old rocks and making of new ones.

Sample Answer:



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Sequencing

Sequencing is a valuable exercise for helping pupils concentrate on the structure of a text in relation to the overall flow of meaning. In order to satisfy themselves that the order makes sense, they will have to consider, among other things questions of cause and effect, and the way that the sequence might be indicated by linguistic/syntactic markers and their own previous knowledge. As with completion tasks, it is important to emphasize to pupils that they should produce a sequence which satisfies the group and not worry about producing the right answer.

The text should be cut up and re-ordered according to the distinctive segments; letters or numbers are essential for identifying the segments. Ideally the passage should be cut up into strips so that the pupils can physically experiment with different sequences.

Activity 3.5 - Sequencing : Tea

In this example the teacher has summarised in note form a passage dealing with the manufacture of tea. The pupils' task was to rearrange the boxes into the most appropriate order. This technique is especially suited to help pupils gain a purchase on a text they have not yet read. Even though they may be unfamiliar with the manufacturing process, they will have had the opportunity of making intelligent guesses and thus have a motivation for reading the passage to see how close they got. Equally, this technique could be used as a means of revision, perhaps sticking the segments into their books in place of notes.

Try ordering the segments yourself before turning to the next page to check against the original passage.

1. Fermentation in a cool, damp room to make black tea.	2. The plants are pruned so they become bushes not trees.	3. Two leaves and a bud are picked from each plant.	4. Tea is sold in an auction, e.g. London.
5. Into our teapots.	6. The land is cleared and the soil broken up and fertilized, ready for planting.	7. For green tea the process stops here.	8. Different types of tea are blended together.
9. Tea is packed into chests ready for export.	10. The harvested tea is taken to a special building for withering.	11. Young tea plants are grown in nurseries.	12. Plants are covered by bamboo frames to shade them from the sun.
13. The tea is taken to a factory to be packeted.	14. Tea is taken by van to the shops and supermarkets.	15. Firing - to produce the black tea we drink.	16. The leaves are rolled to remove any remaining juice.
17. The plants are transplanted to fields on hillsides.	18. Plants are sprayed to prevent disease.		

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Tea (The Full Text)

Since tea is harmed by frost, it is usually grown in countries with a warm climate. The plant also needs plenty of rain and well-drained soil. The best tea is grown on high land in the tropics where the air is cooler. The three largest producers of tea are India, Sri Lanka and China.

The young tea plants are grown in nurseries, protected from the sun by bamboo frames. In China and Japan tea is grown in small patches or 'gardens', usually on steep hillsides which are unsuitable for other crops. In other countries tea is grown on plantations, huge farms growing only one crop.

Many insect pests attack the tea bushes. The worst disease of tea is called blister blight. This is caused by a fungus and is controlled by special sprays.

Once the tea plant has been transplanted from the nurseries to the main fields, it is pruned and trained to grow into a low bush. Without this it would grow into a tree about 15 metres (50ft.) high. Tea plants must grow for five years before the leaves are ready for plucking. When the plants are ready the top two leaves and a bud from each stalk are plucked. As well as looking after the plants, the farmworkers also clear new land, break the soil and fertilize it in preparation for new plants coming from the nurseries.

The full baskets are taken to a nearby factory where the tender leaves are spread on racks to dry or wither. Hot air is blown under and up through the tea leaves. A rolling machine squeezes out any juices left by crushing the leaves.

The leaves are then fermented in a special cool, damp room. They take in oxygen from the air and turn a rusty brown colour. There are two main kinds of tea: green tea, which Chinese and Japanese people like best, and black tea which most other people drink. The leaves are fermented for black tea; green tea is produced without fermentation. Fermentation is stopped after two to four hours by passing the tea through the hot air of a firing machine. Now the tea has become the black dry leaf that we know. Then the tea is packed in special tea chests and taken by cart, lorry, train or boat to the nearest sea port, from where it is exported.

The tea is bought at a sale, called an auction, the largest of which is in London. The best tea goes to the buyer who offers the highest price.

Each brand of tea must always taste the same. To make sure it does, the same mixture is used each time. Sometimes as many as thirty different kinds of tea are used in a recipe. Even the very best teas, such as Darjeeling, are usually blended with other teas. At the factory these mixtures or blends are kept in large hoppers which feed the packing machines. Vans take the packets from the factory to our local shops and supermarkets.

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Disputing the Text : Science

This example comes from the ILEA Publication Modular Secondary Science Resources. It makes use of a number of statements with which the pupil has to interrogate the text to ascertain whether the statements are true or false.

Other examples of this kind of text interrogation could include asking pupils to set their own questions on the text, respond to a series of statements or examine an apparently 'finished' text.

Activity 3.6 - Disputing the Text - Acid Rain is a Problem

ACID RAIN IS A PROBLEM

It causes damage not only in Britain but also in countries many hundreds of kilometres away.

Acid rain is a mixture of harmful chemicals or POLLUTANTS which damage the environment. The pollutants which make acid rain are carried in the air and can travel about 500 km a day - that's about as far as it is from London to Paris or Edinburgh.

A committee was set up to find out what causes acid rain and if it does any damage in Britain. The committee's findings were recently reported in the newspapers.

LOOK AT THE SHEET OF NEWSPAPER CUTTINGS. THEY WILL HELP YOU TO DECIDE IF THE SENTENCES IN THE TABLE OVERLEAF ARE: TRUE, MAYBE TRUE, OR FALSE. When you've decided, put a TICK in that box.

REMEMBER, these are newspaper reports*. They are only summaries. They don't tell you everything.

*** Information**

The newspaper reports talk about EMISSIONS.

This means things being given off - like fumes

and smoke and sulphur dioxide gas.

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SUBJECT	TRUE	MAYBE TRUE	FALSE
Power stations, factory chimneys and car exhausts pump out poisonous fumes (smoke).			
These fumes are mainly sulphur dioxide.			
Power stations, factory chimneys and car exhausts pump out acid rain.			
Britain produces more acid rain than any other country in Western Europe.			
Acid rain is helping to eat away and destroy many famous buildings.			
Only buildings in London are being destroyed.			
Acid rain is killing fish and destroying forests.			
People are suffering more from asthma, allergies and hay fever because of acid rain.			
If Britain cuts sulphur dioxide fumes by 30% there will be no more acid rain pollution.			
The CEGB is getting in the way of people who want to make things to control pollution.			
Many of the facts told to the committee were not right.			
Cutting down the fumes made by power stations will send up electricity prices by 10%.			
Cutting down the fumes from car exhausts will make cars more expensive to buy.			

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Acid rain killing Britain say MPs

POLLUTION is threatening to destroy Britain's heritage, a group of MPs warned yesterday.

They blamed "acid rain" for damaging historic buildings, killing fish and posing unacceptable risks to many areas of outstanding beauty.

Buildings already damaged by the deadly rainfall—largely made up of sulphur dioxide from the chimneys of power stations and factories—include Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral.

Even the Palace of Westminster had suffered "serious damage" from acid rain.

In their report, the all-party Environment Select Committee brand Britain as the worst polluter in Western Europe.

By MARK DOWDNEY

They attack Whitehall "complacency" and call for urgent controls to deal with pollution.

The Central Electricity Generating Board is attacked in the report for obstructing firms developing pollution controls.

But the CEGB last night accused the MPs of "fundamental errors of fact and science which must cast doubt on their findings."

Industry bosses also warned that tougher controls would increase costs and lead to even higher unemployment.

'ACID RAIN' HITS ANCIENT BUILDINGS

ACID rain pollution is ruling away Britain's most beautiful buildings, a shock report by MPs revealed yesterday.

The deadly rain—caused by sulphur smoke from factories, power stations and cars—is also poisoning fish and could even threaten human health it warns.

An all-party committee chaired by Tory Sir Hugh Rossi says Britain is Europe's biggest polluter of the atmosphere.

11 list famous buildings damaged as Westminster Abbey, Lincoln Cathedral, Liverpool Cathedral, St Paul's and the Palace of Westminster.

The report claims acid rain can increase lead and copper levels in drinking water.

But the Commons Environment committee's call for action sparked a storm last night.

For low-pollution car engines and safer power stations would hoist motoring and electricity bills.

ACID RAIN RAP FOR BRITAIN'S POWER MEN

By DON COOLICAN Home Affairs Editor

BRITAIN'S power stations were accused yesterday of causing some of the world's worst pollution.

They pump out poisonous gas which falls as acid rain, destroying fish life and accelerating the destruction of famous buildings throughout North Western Europe and Scandinavia, says an all-party group of MPs.

Now the All-Party Commons Environment Committee is calling for urgent Government action.

The MPs want Britain to cut emissions of the poisonous gas, sulphur dioxide, by 30 per cent in 10 years.

And they want the Central Electricity Generating Board to reduce emissions from coal-fired power stations by 60 per cent.

Allergy

Acid rain is already destroying famous historic buildings like Westminster Abbey and the cathedrals of Lincoln, Liverpool and St Pauls, they say.

Fish are dying in some British rivers and lakes, and human health may even be at risk. Asthma, allergy and hay fever levels are rising.

Britain is already the largest producer of acid rain in Western Europe.

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SCANDINAVIAN SCANDAL!
Fish life destroyed in 70% of Norway's rivers.
20 000 Swedish lakes dying.

ACROPOLIS CRUMBLING!
More deterioration in last 20 years, than previous 2 000!

TRAINS DELAYED IN POLAND!
Near Katowice railway lines are rusting and trains can only run at 40 m.p.h.

MONEY FOR MAINTENANCE
Machinery – fences – guttering – roofing – transmission towers

THE BLACK FOREST FIASCO!
Ten billion fir trees in Germany are dead or dying

NOW: USE THE NEWSPAPER REPORTS and ANY OTHER INFORMATION ON THIS SHEET TO HELP YOU TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS.

Question	Answer
1. Make a list of all the things that are being damaged or destroyed by acid rain.	
2. Which fuels are fossil fuels? Name them.	
3. Where do the fumes that cause acid rain come from?	
4. What does CEGB stand for?	
5. Why is the CEGB and some other people against moves to cut down the fumes that cause acid rain?	

Do you think all this talk about acid rain is a lot of nonsense? Or do you think it is very serious and that acid rain is destroying the world we live in?

DESIGN A POSTER OR WRITE A LETTER TO A FRIEND OR TO A NEWSPAPER SAYING WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT THE PROBLEMS OF ACID RAIN.

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Revisions : Science

An interactive activity involving group work is often a good motivating strategy to see if students understood what concepts were taught in a particular unit of work. The following science activity (Activity 3.7) allows students to revise a unit completed on solids/liquids and gases.

Activity 3.7 - Revision : Solids/Liquids/Gases

Solids, Liquids and Gases - A Card Game for three players or groups of players.

Rules - a) Short Game

1. There are 3 picture cards. Put the three picture cards face downwards.
2. Each player (or group) picks one picture card.
3. Shuffle the other cards and spread them face upwards on the table.
4. Each player (or group) must try to collect all the cards which describe the state (solid, liquid or gas) shown on their picture card.
5. Each player (or group) in turn gets the chance to pick one card. They turn it over to find out whether it belongs to their picture.
6. If it belongs to their picture card, they will keep the card. If not they must give it to the player who is collecting it.
7. The game continues until all three groups have completed their sets.

b) Longer Game

Replace rule 6 with : If it belongs to their picture card, they will keep the card. If not, they must replace it face upwards on the table.

c) Extension Activity - A Co-operative Activity for the whole group.

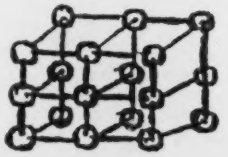
When all players have completed their sets, sort the cards for solids into two groups.

i) cards describing what we can find by observing specimens of solids, liquids and gases.

ii) cards describing how the particle theory explains these observations.

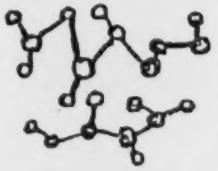
Repeat this for liquids and finally gases.

It is usually invisible.	*It keeps its own shape.*
It is runny.	*It stays in a lump.*
It feels hard.	*It is wet.*



SOLID

GAS



LIQUID

The particles are in a fixed position.	*The particles move slowly about.*	*The particles are spread far apart.*	*The particles are fairly close to each other.*
We can't feel it.	*It does not have a fixed volume or shape.*	*The particles are packed close together.*	*The particles have alot of movement energy.*
The particles move quickly.	*It fills any container you put it in.*	*The particles have almost no movement energy.*	*The particles have some movement energy.*
It spreads to fill the bottom of the container.	*It spreads out in all directions.*	*The particles do not attract each other.*	*The particles attract each other weakly.*
It has a fixed size and shape.	*It stays in one place.*	*The particles attract each other strongly.*	*The particles are not in a pattern.*
It flows from one place to another.	*It has a fixed volume, but it changes shape.*	*The particles have a weak pattern.*	*The particles are in a fixed pattern.*

Using a Text with Students

Pre-reading Activities

Discussion
Brainstorming
Networking

Reading Activities

Set A : Dividing the Text
Responding to parts of the text
Prediction
Sequencing
Prioritising

Set B : Deletion
Underlining
Difficult Vocabulary Activities

Set C : Question Setting
Comparing Texts
Disputing a Text
Correcting a Text
Role Playing

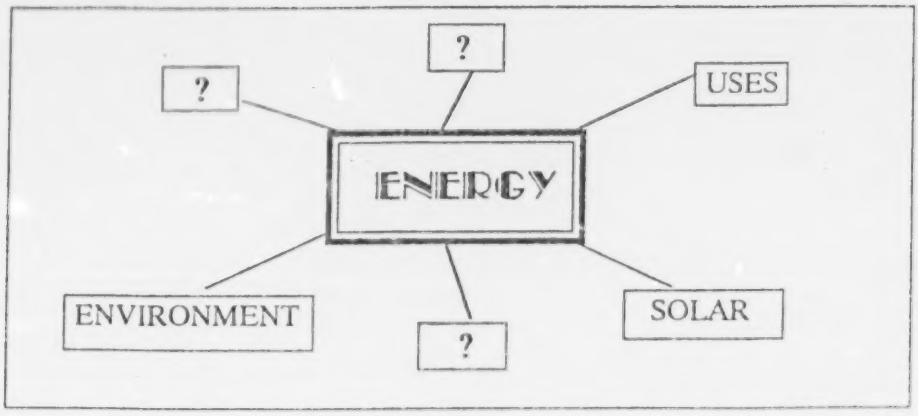
Other : Re-representing the Text

A group of teachers were given the above strategies for working with text. They were then given the following text intitled '**Energy and the Future**' to work with on the theme of energy.

Here is the lesson plan they created.

Activity 3.8 - Energy : A Lesson Plan

1) A Network



2) They divided the text before presenting it to the students.

In recent years, many people have been advocating the development of nuclear, or **"atomic" energy**. But nuclear power plants are tremendously expensive. A nuclear reactor produces radioactive wastes, which must somehow be kept isolated from the environment for up to 500 000 years before they can be considered safe. Nuclear power is very controversial. The controversy centres mainly around its safety and expense. However, most people agree that we need new sources of energy for our homes and industry, and nuclear power does seem to offer some hope to an otherwise energy-depleted world.

Wind power has been neglected in our century. It is also a diffuse, expensive energy source. However, in many isolated places, it might be cheaper and more efficient to generate wind power on the spot than to bring in electricity from far away on long transmission lines.

Fuel is **petroleum**, which includes both oil and natural gas. Both oil and natural gas come from the same wells. The United States passed the peak of its **natural gas** production in 1963. Never again will we produce as much gas as we produced then. Petroleum experts say that the world peak of oil production will be reached in the 1990s. After that petroleum production will decline sharply.

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Certain companies have developed electric generating systems fueled by **garbage and wastes.** The exhaust gases are filtered to remove air pollutants. Before entering the furnace, the trash is automatically shredded and sorted. Burnable materials flow into the furnace. Iron, aluminum, and glass flow to separate bins for recycling. Recycling itself saves energy.

Studies have shown that a city actually could make a profit from its garbage disposal by selling the electricity produced by burning, and by recycling the remaining materials.

Today, it seems apparent that we must develop alternative sources of energy. An important alternative source is **coal.** There is still plenty of coal. But the use of coal offers many problems. Deep-shaft mining is dangerous and expensive. Strip mining damages farmlands, forests, and landscapes. Restoring strip-mined ground to productivity is expensive and raises the price of coal. The burning of coal generates serious air pollution. The transport and use of coal are not simple, convenient, nor cheap.

Solar-powered steam engines were running 100 years ago. However, only recently have scientists looked seriously at the possibilities of using the sun as a power source. A few solar-heated houses were built in this country as early as 1950. But a solar house-heating system costs more to install than a fuel-burning furnace. Few people could see any sense in using solar energy while petroleum was cheap and plentiful. (Now, with oil and gas prices going up, a solar heater can pay for itself during the first few years of its operation.) Mirror-concentrated solar heat could run steam-driven electric generators. Solar energy even produces electricity directly, on spacecraft. The use of solar energy is very promising.

Geothermal sources may provide a limited amount of energy in volcanic areas. In such places, natural steam or hot water found underground can be used to generate electricity. Exploration for geothermal heat is going on all over the world. But geothermal energy is a "diffuse" source (oil and coal are "concentrated" sources). Geothermal sources are not cheap to tap. But in fuel-short areas of the world, geothermal energy will be an important asset.

3) They asked the students to underline forms of energy.

4) They asked the students to prioritise the divided text by how common the use of that energy was.

5) They discussed with the students a comparison of their prioritised text to the original text.

6) They asked the students to identify other orderings, e.g.

chronological order

order from most expensive to least

ecologically friendly order ..... etc.

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7) They asked the students to compare the text to their original network.

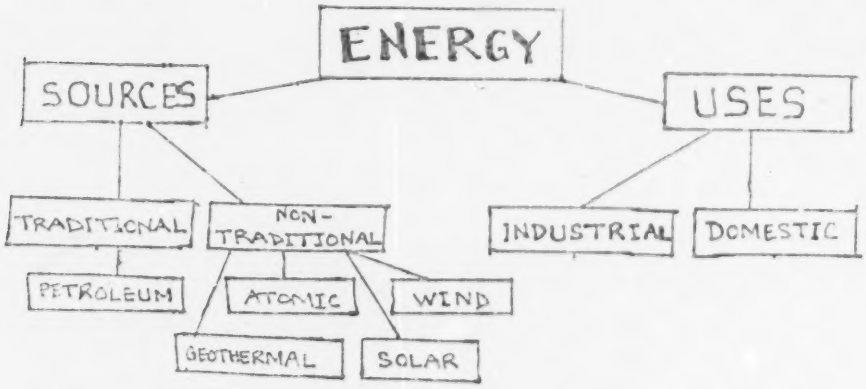
8)

> Geothermal sources may provide a limited amount of energy in volcanic areas. In such places, natural steam or hot water found underground can be used to generate electricity. Exploration for geothermal heat is going on all over the world. **But geothermal energy is a "diffuse" source (oil and coal are "concentrated" sources).** Geothermal sources are not cheap to tap. But in fuel-short areas of the world, geothermal energy will be an important asset.

The group decided that one paragraph in particular contained difficult vocabulary.

They extracted this paragraph and created an activity to deal with this.

Diffuse **Concentrated**



Diffuse	Concentrated
Geothermal	Oil
?	Coal
?	?
?	?

9) The final activity was to ask the students to identify questions raised by the text, e.g.

what made energy so important?

where in the Caribbean are different types of energy used?

SUMMARY

By planning a greater number of activities which children can do together, the teacher frees his/her time to work with individuals who need extra help.

One could actually plan fifteen or twenty activities in each subject and in areas mentioned in this chapter. We hope that the eight examples will give you some ideas of interesting ways to approach your subject area with your students.

CHAPTER 4

THE SKILLS OF WRITING

WRITER'S CONFERENCE
Spelling is only part of the skil of riting-
Ritten inglish is very compleks
You must speke prop inglesh to rite it propurly...
TABUL-A-2

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4. THE SKILLS OF WRITING

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SUMMARY

4. THE SKILLS OF WRITING

INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the writing process itself as well as the mechanics associated with that process. It therefore is intended for all teachers, not only those who teach English as a subject.

Through the use of ten articles or samples as well as ten hands-on activities for students in a language classroom, the chapter examines various concepts, strategies and activities related to a number of items.

The writing process, linguistics, spelling, dictionary use, punctuation and various cohesive devices used by teachers to help students improve their written work are all examined by various educators.

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SOME WRITING IDEAS

This section discusses four writing strategies which can be used with students. Keeping a writing portfolio for each student is an excellent way for them to track their own developmental process. The learning log goes one step further in its attempt to help students develop higher level thinking skills - in this case: classification. Using the RAFT principle helps students conceptualise and edit their work while the eight ideas for using this principle helps the teacher get started on its classroom use.

The section also offers tips for the teacher when marking students' work. Common symbols are introduced when marking for mechanical accuracy. The section concludes with an examination of dialect - an important consideration for all Caribbean teachers.

Writing Portfolios

These serve a variety of purposes. It should contain samples of students best work, 'false starts', their 'dead ends', their most clever attempts, research notes, list of ideas for future writing, pieces to which they can return to re-think and revise, and add any comments. It can be used for one subject, or a whole school resource.

Learning Log

The purpose of this is to see if students have comprehended what they have read or been taught. Just five minutes at the end of a lesson allows the students time to practise classifying their thinking and interpreting their learning. The teacher does not mark the learning log but can add to the students' comments.

R.A.F.T. - An Aid to Writing

R - The Writer (Who are you?)
A - The Audience (To whom is it written?)
F - The Format (How is it to be written?)
T - The Topic (What topic have you chosen and what is your stand-point?)

Eight Ways to Use the RAFT Approach to Writing

1. Writing in a new format
2. Writing for a variety of formats
3. A prompted writing activity

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4. A piece of writing prompted by decision making questions
5. Re-interpreting writing - forming a different point of view
6. Writing in speech only
7. Writing in dialect
8. Translating to/from dialect - Standard English

Marking for Mechanical Accuracy

On all occasions, work should be marked primarily for content but, even if you do this, mechanical errors in writing can still affect how you respond to writing and how you assess it. Thus it is important for ALL staff to tackle areas like spelling, punctuation and grammar.

MECHANICAL ACCURACY IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL THE TEACHERS AND NOT JUST THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT.

A simple common marking policy should be adopted by all staff:

- **Sp** for spelling
- **T** for tense
- **P** for punctuation
- // for paragraph
- Λ for omission

Marking should not include all errors. Other methods are more effective and less time-consuming:

- teacher selects one or two errors repeated in a piece of work and explains them to whole class
- teacher tells pupils that he/she will mark one error only or one type of error
- marking by a peer
- proof-reading time provided before work is handed in.

In the secondary school pupils will have to cope with sentences of a greater complexity as they use more non-fiction texts. They need help with these texts.

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Dialect

A special note for V.S.O. teachers in countries where a dialect version of English is spoken. Dialect is a particular problem for the VSO teacher and is often more difficult to cope with than working in a country with a completely different language of its own. It is absolutely essential for teachers to make a real effort to learn dialect and in most places there are opportunities to listen to local speech, e.g.:

groups of women plaiting hair, shelling peas, etc.

bus-stops which, in rural communities, are often meeting places

watching cricket and football in the street

the rum-shop (men only).

Pupils will often give guidance and can be very helpful.

In some countries the use of dialect in school is prohibited but in those places where this is not the case, the occasional phrase or sentence in dialect used by the teacher will promote an atmosphere of warmth and will make students feel that their language is valued. In such countries, pupils should be encouraged to move between Standard English and dialect.

Sample 4:02 : LINGUISTIC BARRIERS TO READING SCHOOL TEXTS : Perera

What follows is a brief resume of an article by Katharine Perera in which she explores some linguistic barriers to reading school text books ('Some Linguistic Difficulties in School Textbooks' Perera in the Language of School Subjects, ed Bruce Gilham, Heinemann). Perera's study is based on a comparison of 25 pages from children's text books and 25 comparable pages from stories written for children. For bilingual pupils, these linguistic barriers may be further compounded by cultural ones.

Discourse Level Differences

1. **Fiction is more personal than non-fiction** - the language is more accessible and closer to the conventions of everyday speech (dialogue rarely figures in non-fiction texts). Also fiction makes much greater use of pronouns and much less use of impersonal and passive constructions that characterise non-fiction texts. There are far fewer people in non-fiction texts and it would seem that the tendency to exclude the agent from statements makes the language of non-fiction much more difficult to process. Writers of text books should allow 'people who are agents to appear as subjects'. For example the following sentences could easily be converted into active forms.

   Holidays were taken at seaside resorts.

   During the 17th century roads became straighter.

2. **Children's fiction tends to be chronological** whereas non-fiction tends not to impel the reader forward by generating a desire to find out what happens next. Fiction becomes progressively more easy to read, while non-fiction presents difficulties all the way through.

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3. **Non-fiction texts organise meaning with greater reliance on linguistic signposts.** Readers of fiction are not used to being guided by such markers (*moreover, therefore, on the other hand, one reason, etc.*). Children who are unfamiliar with these features, are not able to read with the same predictive power as they can with fiction.

4. **Non-fiction requires much more information processing than fiction.** The former usually has a larger number of new nouns while the latter has fewer different nouns with more pronominal repetitions. Non-fiction offers less cohesion, less to bind the text together.

Sentence-Level Differences between Fiction and Non-Fiction

1. Interrupting Constructions

Non-fiction texts tends to have more words and phrases between the subject and verb, thus making the important connection more difficult to make.

The agouti, *a very nervous 20 inch, 6 pound rodent that lives in South America,* can leap twenty feet from a sitting position.

2. Advanced Subordinate Clauses

Subordinate clauses are not in themselves a barrier to comprehension; children use them extensively from the age of three. But non-fiction makes far greater use of relative clauses and concessional clauses (although) which are used far less frequently in fiction texts. Clauses introduced by 'whose' and 'whom' for example don't appear in children's speech or writing until the teenage years.

> Asteroids are lumps of rock and metal *whose* paths round the sun lie mainly between Mars and Jupiter.

3. Verb Phrases

Fiction texts have significantly more verbs which are active and dynamic than non-fiction texts which are characterised by much greater use of copulas ('Oxygen is a gas') and passive constructions which deprive such texts of the momentum that is present in fiction.

> Some plastic articles *are made* by heating and shaping a piece of thermoplastic sheet which *has* previously *been made* by extrusion, or by calendering (when softened plastics material *is squeezed* between hot metal rollers) or *has been polymerised* as a sheet.

4. Noun Phrases

Work by Perera and Quirk reveals that scientific writing contains up to four times the number of complex subject noun phrases than is found in fiction, e.g. *The remains and shapes of animals and plants buried for millions of years in the earth's rocks are called fossils.* Long subjects place a particularly heavy burden in the short term memory of slow readers.

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Some Implications for the Classroom

1. Convert non-fiction discourse into dialogue or narrative.
2. English teachers could make use of more non-fiction texts.
3. Non-fiction texts should be read aloud to pupils.
4. Children could be asked to convert prose into a dialogue between an expert and a questioner.
5. Interrupting and long subjects can be explicitly taught using underlinings and capitals.

Sample 4:03 : UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN'S SPELLING

The following is a revised version of an article which originally appeared in Gnosis, published by the ILEA Diagnostic Centre for Learning Difficulties. This revised version was written by *Ian Forsyth*.

Over a three-year period at the Centre for Language in Primary Education, groups of primary teachers worked with me to improve our understanding of children's spelling. We gathered and examined children's spelling mistakes; we tried to account for these; we thought about ways to help children improve their spelling. We found it useful to refer to the work of Charles Read (1971, 1975) and of Venezky (1970). This article makes some general observations about the English spelling system, before going on to summarise our most important findings.

IN PERSPECTIVE

If we're not careful, spelling - which is certainly not of small importance - may take over our thinking to the extent that we forget that it is just one of the skills involved in learning to write. For all sorts of reasons, spelling, which was once a subject in British primary schools, can come to dominate our thinking so that it becomes synonymous with writing, although a moment's reflection should suffice to convince us that only a fool would take on the enormous task of learning to write in order to be able to spell correctly.

Unfortunately, spelling mistakes have come to be seen as a mark of an illiterate person. They stigmatise a writer in a way no other fault does. So much so, that it is practically impossible for us to take a piece of writing seriously if it is badly spelt. The unique status that spelling is accorded by us makes life particularly difficult for both teachers and learners, because it creates a climate in which spelling mistakes cannot easily be tolerated, and this is a pity because learners need above all else to be able to make mistakes. One of the most important lessons we have learned - well almost - from studies of language acquisition is that the mistakes children make in learning to speak are necessary, systematic, predictable and transitory.

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Where spelling is concerned, learners need to make mistakes and they need their teachers to help them to make sense of these. Even more important, they need to know what they *can* do. The chances are that they are much more likely to be aware of what they don't know or can't do. Instead of forever drawing attention to mistakes, teachers would be much more profitably engaged in helping children to formulate what they *do* know about words and written language as a whole. Children talking with each other and with their teachers about words is far more valuable for them than, say, copying lists of unfamiliar words for which they have no use. The reason this matters is that if children are to develop their conceptual grasp of written language - and do this they must if they are to become fully literate - they need to do more than practise writing. There is a beguiling simplicity about the notion that you learn to write by writing, as though the development of written language somehow took care of itself. Such a view fails to take account of our need to make sense of the activities we engage in. Children need opportunities to think about the nature of written language and the uses to which they put writing, as well as opportunities to write. They need to develop a language to talk about language: not a set of terms to be learnt by heart, but to make sense in the context of their own writing. Above all, they and their teachers need to see spelling as something that is perfectible, not something that is just right or wrong.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH ENGLISH SPELLING

Nothing, or at least, nothing much. In fact there is a lot to be said for a system that is both stable and self-contained and which, at the same time, is recognised as standard in a speech community as large and varied as our own. Our orthography enables us to move through space and time in a way that would be extremely difficult if not impossible were we to adopt a truly phonetic writing system. In this sense, the more resistant our writing system is to functioning as a mirror of speech, the greater its potential use. Such a system, with its own symbols, conventions, and patterns does far more than increase the range of our communications with others. It extends the potential of language itself as an instrument for thinking and learning, precisely because it is an alternative to speech and not a duplicate. However, only a system as complex as language itself could enable us to do this. Our orthography has therefore developed so as to include information about the grammar and the lexicon of English, as well as the sounds. In addition to these purely structural aspects of language, it inevitably includes information about its own history because it has been in use for so long. It would be odd if it were otherwise.

The problem is not so much with English spelling as with people who think they know how an alphabetic writing system *should* work. Those, that is, who assume not only that the business of writing is to represent speech, but that, in the case of alphabetic writing, that it operates on the single principle that one sound equals one symbol. From this false assumption, they conclude that any spelling which departs from this is irregular, and, therefore, a legitimate target for the attentions of spelling reformers. What they fail to recognise is that writing is a fully autonomous linguistic system whose true purpose is not to represent speech - least of all one level of speech - but to enable us to create written language. Learning to use such a highly complex system means coming to terms with the fact that letters have both grammatical and lexical functions as well as their more obvious phonological uses.

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We can easily see how these other systems operate. For example, we make a broad distinction in English between singular and plural nouns. In speech the plural forms are determined by phonological rules which give us three distinct forms: /s/ as in *rights* /ts/ as in *paws*, and /iz/ as in *horses* (in addition, we have a handful of items which are the vestige and reminder of a much earlier system based on vowel change: *goose-geese, foot-feet,* and so on). Writing usually marks plurality simply by the addition of the letter 's', whatever the sound. In other words, writing ignores the phonological changes and uses the spelling to acknowledge the underlying category, plural, to which all three different sounds belong. The implication is that the grammatical similarity they share is judged to be more important than the phonological differences, even though the latter may be superficially more apparent. If we look closely at the lexicon of written English, we can find any number of spellings which, although phonologically odd, show how written language marks underlying relationships between words by retaining the same vowel letter instead of reflecting the change in pronunciation. This is exemplified by pairs like:

provide - provision	derive - derivation
deride - derision	elide - elision
decide - decision	divide - division

or pairs like

courage - courageous	deduce - deduction
advantage - advantageous	produce - production

or

declare - declaration	phone - phonic

and so on.

Again, pronunciation is at variance with spelling, and again the reason is that a visual mark of the underlying relationship between these and other such examples is more important than the sound changes which is regular and, therefore, predictable provided you are a native speaker of English.

Take another example. Many reformers lament the passing of Anglo-Saxon thorn from our stock of letters because this just leaves us with 'th' which has to serve both */ /thing* and also*/ /that.* Phonologically, it might be argued we still need this distinction; however, there is a good argument for retaining one symbol only for what are after all, all unvoiced and voiced variants of the same sound. It is this initial 'th' is only voiced in grammatical items, never in lexical terms. In other words, demonstratives (*this, that, these, those*), conjunctions (then, therefore), define article (the), pronouns (thee, they) and similar *form* words are always / /. They are a handful of words and, more important than this, they are clearly restricted and easily identified by their grammatical functions.

It is both economic and logical for the orthography to operate in this way. If it were to mark every sound change we would need at least forty-four letter symbols in place of the present twenty-six. Not only that, if we were to take this principle seriously, we would need different spellings for the same word. For example, we obviously find it extremely useful to make the following kind of distinction in spoken English:

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I can do anything better than you can .... /æ/ /ɒ/

No you can't .... /ɑ:/

Yes I can .... /æ/

Does this mean we want three spellings for 'can?' Clearly not; it makes much more sense to treat them all as instances of the same word.

Taken together, examples such as these show us something of the uniqueness of writing. At the same time, they clearly show that learning to spell is much more than simply matching letters to sounds. From their earliest contacts with written language, children have to cope with a highly complex system of visual symbols which, though arbitary in itself, is linked with the system of language at different levels. When they are learning to spell, children have to operate and extend their knowledge of language at a level of abstraction that is quite remarkable. It is hardly surprising that, in the process, they should make mistakes. Moreover, those children who are tied to a purely phonic approach to spelling will find that they have to learn far more than they are taught.

WHAT DO GOOD SPELLERS DO?

They make mistakes. Learning to spell is a gradual process during which learners have to internalise a system of rules for spelling through their observations of written language and as a result of their own attempts to make written language work for them. In this respect, learning to spell is not unlike learning to speak, because learners have to infer and learn to operate a set of principles from which they can generate correct or likely spellings. In other words, they have to learn enough about the underlying rules of spelling to be able to make intelligent attempts at spelling words they have never seen. The apprentice spellers we studied made the following kinds of mistakes.

1. **Letter names were used to represent vowel sounds.**

Examples:

Kathleen Prker, Indians r fighting, Kam (came), rost (roast), ben (been), strem (stream), stat (state), slep (sleep), strat (straight), nabas (neighbours), Kat (Katie), famle (family), drk (dark), fred (freed).

The logic of this is obvious. Moreover, children will do it in spite of teacher attempts to discourage it, for example, by insisting on letters being 'sounded out'. We easily forget just how much children have to learn about letters: their shape, their correct orientation on the page, their many functions (how do you sound out 'magic e'?) and to expect children to use them and learn all about them without being able to refer to them is, to say the least, unrealistic.

2. **Letters that are used to stand for nasal sounds were often omitted or used interchangeably before a succeeding consonant.**

Examples:

sig (sing), fide (find), prims (prince), pris (prints), balansig (balancing), atepor (attempt), weth (went), youg (young).

There are two possible explanations for this. One is that when a nasal sound preceeds a consonant in English, that sound must be articulated in the same place as the consonant. There is no movement of the tongue between the articulation of

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nasal sound and the following consonant, which suggests that our spellers are attending to the place of articulation. Another possible explanation of this omission in their spelling is that they perceive nasality as a feature of the preceding vowel. Whatever the answer, it is clear that they are picking up the common feature of nasality. To say of them that 'they haven't yet learned their sounds' is to trivialise what they are in fact doing and to underestimate wildly what they are capable of achieving. Here and elsewhere, we find them operating like apprentice phoneticians.

3. Vowels with strong stress were included; vowels or even syllables with weak stress were omitted.

Examples:

intrest (interest), most (monster), terrble (terribly), parshoot (parachute), happley (happily), anfink (anything), fathr (father), olps (octopus), cubde (cupboard), travlirs (travellers), luckly (luckily), trabl (trouble).

Again, spellers' capacity for careful attention to details of our sound system is apparent. When they operate this kind of knowledge, they are doing something that is both remarkable and, in its own way, logical. They are taking implicit knowledge that they have acquired in learning to speak, and they are trying to apply this knowledge to spelling. The rule they are operating here goes something like this: 'If you can leave it out in speech, leave it out in writing.' The vowels they omit mark exactly those syllables most likely to be elided in normal speech.

4. Local accents were represented phonetically.

Examples:

are (our), thet (that), fing (thing), bicors (because), fand (found), defe (death), bref (breath), barf (bath), ann (an), fill (feel), over (other), pand (pound).

We were surprised at the relatively small number of mistakes of this sort. We did wonder if the issues raised by differences of accent and dialect might not be something of a red herring. Besides, we were able to confirm - thanks to friends in Newcastle - that children with Geordie accents came up with spellings like shon (shone), exited (excited), cubard (cupboard), there (their), geting (getting), bare (bear), just as our children did. In other words, like the London children we work with - who are if anything a much less homogenous linguistic population - they are representing the sound system of English on the basis of their limited knowledge of how the orthography works, and not simply trying to transcribe a local accent. To take this point further, it is sometimes assumed that working class children or children who habitually use a non-standard dialect of English have further to go than children who habitually use standard English with an RP accent. We found no evidence in our children's spelling mistakes to support this view, although it is quite widely held, both by teachers and by many children, who equate writing with 'talking posh'. The notion of 'interference' from dialect or accent is quite unsubstantiated and potentially harmful. More important than this, however, it is theoretically weak because it does not fully recognise the complexity of our writing system; nor, therefore, does it take account of just how much children have to learn in order to produce a passable piece of writing. The shift that all children have to make from a set of vocal symbols to a system of visual symbols transcends any difficulties that might be traced to differences that could arise from accent or dialect. Whether we write 'fing' or 'ting' for thing, we are merely substituting one item for another. We can already see what we want to say. The enormous leap, the shift in abstraction, from one medium to another has been accomplished, and that initial distance is the same for all of us.

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5. Local accents were over-compensated for.

Examples:

coffing (coffin), terithic (terrific), whaich (watch), thorthest (furthest), thoned (phoned).

Again, these account for a very small number of the total number of mistakes we looked at, and in some ways they show how uncomfortable it can be for learners who are trying to make sense of parallel but independent systems. Our hope is that these particular examples of hypercorrection were self-initiated and based on the children's own observations of how others speak. Nevertheless, they are a reminder of the kind of problems that can arise when classrooms are turned into linguistic surgeries and learning to read and write becomes the occasion for demonstrating to children that they can't speak their own language. As a neighbour of mine once said to me 'I can remember learning to read, we used to say the words and then the teacher would tell us how to pronounce them properly'. Well happily, those days are gone.

6. Spellings were phonemic: one letter equals one speech sound.

Examples:

cald (called), plad (played), fond (found), rond (round), frend (friend), wen (when), skul (school), tuch (touch), sed (said), bort (bought), rap (wrap), rist (wrist), past (past), fith (fifth), sisors (scissors), popt (popped), disi (dizzy), jumpt (jumped), watch (watched), watchis (watches), dast (danced), jely (jelly) ninty (ninety).

We found masses of these throughout the range of children we looked at. They tended to predominate in the older or more experienced children's writing. The kind of mistakes we noted earlier under the first three headings were increasingly less evident in these children's writing. These mistakes show children working with a well-developed notion of how alphabets in their primitive state work: that is according to the principle that one sound equals one symbol. It remains for them to learn how fully developed writing system works, with or without the help of a teacher.

7. 'ch' is substituted for 't' in words where 't' is followed by 'r'; 'j' replaces 'd' in words where 'd' is followed by 'r'.

Examples:

conchrole (control), chap or chrap (trap), Sumuchr (Swastra), gink (drink).

Whenever the sounds t or d occur before the sound r in English as in *trip* and *drawn*, they are phonetically different from the initial t or d sounds in words like *temper* or *damp*. The following r slows down the release of the t or d and there is an accompanying hiss of air which results in a chk or zhh sound. This phenomenon, 'affrication', is one of a number of examples which make the point that speech sounds are not fixed in the way that letters are. They change according to their environment. In other words, when children write 'conchrole' for *control* or 'gink' for *drink* they are observing and trying to represent a fine but real phonetic distinction which the orthography, for reasons of economy, cannot afford to make.

8. Words of two syllables are written as such.

Examples:

ketel (kettle), casel (castle), tabel (table). These mistakes are an extension of those we noted under 3. Children who make them are now giving full value to the parts of words that might previously have been omitted. This is precisely what a narrow phonetic transcription would require.

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9. **Word boundaries are incorrectly marked.**

Examples:

a loud (aloud), good bye (goodbye), grave stone (gravestone), tofo (to go), to night (tonight) my self (myself), a fraid (afraid), a gain (again), a bout (about), a round (around), out side (outside), to gether (together), A manda (Amanda).

These are especially interesting, not so much because of the frequency with which they occur, but because they are a reminder that spelling difficulties are bound up with more than sounds. In fact they are so plausible that many teachers might be disinclined to classify them as mistakes at all because their origins are so obvious. Nevertheless, they are included here because they show that children learning to write have to learn to identify the word as a unit of the orthography in circumstances where their knowledge of spoken language may be misleading.

CONCLUSION

When we examine the spelling mistakes children make, it looks as though the overwhelming majority of these are the result of overgeneralisations of one sort or another and, more often than not, of very careful attention to the sounds of language. Children seem to be inferring, applying, and refining their knowledge of the rules of spelling in the context of their growing competence as writers. We concluded from the children whose work we looked at that the ones who made the most rapid progress in learning to spell correctly were the ones who wrote regularly and enjoyed writing, and who, moreover, were able to learn not to allow themselves to be totally distracted by the sounds of language.

HOW CAN WE HELP?

There are a number of positive steps that might be taken.

1. Try to understand the logic of spelling mistakes, and begin to see these as indications of progress.
2. Don't just look for mistakes. Help children to see what they can do and what they do know.
3. Get to know more about the systems of English spelling.
4. Encourage children to be aware of the similarities and differences between speech and writing.
5. Stop teaching words and start teaching about words. Children need an appropriate language to talk about written language IN RELATION TO THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE, not from a set of language exercises.
6. See spelling as part of the total development of children's language; the danger is that learning to write may be defined implicitly as learning to spell.
7. Help children to see themselves as writers, and to see writing as an activity that makes sense.

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Sample 4:04 : SPELLING STRATEGIES

The great debate about spelling is still conducted under the banners of 'caught?' or 'taught?', questions which certainly predated Margaret Peters' (1970 and recently revised) book of that name. A mass of often contradictory research has served partly to confuse the issue, and mainly to suggest that spelling skills are often 'caught, but still need to be 'taught'.

It is certainly true that many children who enter secondary schools as poor spellers emerge as competent or even faultless spellers without having received much formal teaching in the particular skills involved. The reasons are probably as various as the children themselves. At the other extreme there are a group of children whose lack of ability with spelling creates constant anxiety for them, pressured as they often are by the combined demands of teachers, parents and society at large. Too often the dominant expectation of their writing in all subjects is that it should be accurate, and too often inadequate help is given them to achieve this aim.

Teaching spelling is difficult, and there is obviously no one method which is applicable to all children. What is needed is a range of strategies, some of which run as a thread through teaching, others of which are brought out from time to time. At the end of his book *Teaching Spelling* (Ward Lock 1978) Mike Torbe combines evidence from research and from experienced teachers, and offers the following handy hints.

Ten Handy Hints for Teaching Spelling

1. Teaching from spelling lists, on the basis of study followed by tests, does not help the child to become an efficient speller in his or her writing.
2. Slightly better is to use the test followed by study of the words spelled incorrectly, but this causes only a marginal improvement.
3. Spelling rules are of little help, because if they are thorough enough to explain a pattern, they're likely to be incomprehensible to the children.
4. Children who have a good general understanding of sound-symbol relationship, even if they do not spell well at the moment, are, as Margaret Peters says, 'well on their way' to being good spellers.
5. Teachers who have an enthusiasm and enjoyment for spoken and written language, and a care for it, have pupils who are likely to be good spellers.
6. An interest in words, their meanings, shapes, history and sound, generates improved spelling.
7. The more interested pupils are in what they write, the more attention they are prepared to give to its appearance, including spelling.
8. When children recognise that their writing is for a real public audience, not just the teacher but other people, they are more likely to be concerned with their spelling.
9. Good spelling habits are:

   the habit of checking guesses by looking the word up, or asking

   the habit of proof-reading (which tends, ironically to arise from a concern in the first place to spell well)

   the habit of spelling analysis: how it is pronounced? is the spelling phonetic or not? how can I remember the difficult bits?

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10. Spelling is changing all the time, but slowly. What one generation finds appalling the next generation accepts. For example, today we worry about *all right,* and prefer it to *alright;* but we happily accept *already, although, almost ... Program* is now generally used, relating to computers (or *computor*?). *Adviser* and *advisor* are often alternatives; *ize* endings have been almost totally replaced by *-ise.*

Be careful, therefore, about condemning words too quickly: The Oxford English Dictionary gives *develop* and *develope* as alternative spellings. Give your time not to outraged attacks on what offends you but on the more urgent and useful task of teaching pupils how to spell by considering the recurring patterns of English spelling.

Eight Helpful Spelling Strategies

The following strategies have also proved helpful.

1. Posters

Spelling help needs to be available in various forms in the classroom. A permanent display of posters can be a useful aid, but experience suggests that the value is minimised unless the posters are created by the pupils themselves. Individually or in pairs pupils can design posters which make clear common errors or explain simple rules. The results are usually inventive and practical.

2. Personal Spelling Books

Lists have always featured large in teaching spelling, but the only lists of words pupils really need are those that they personally find confusing, and those they often need to use. Small books in which pupils record such words are a valuable help, and grateful head teachers will sometimes give money for departments to produce their own. You need a pocket-size book with alphabetical divisions, and commonly misspelt words already in place. In addition there should be useful lists, (days, months, numbers, etc.), a page for pupils to record their own specially difficult words, and pages for other departments to add their specialist lists. Take a staff meeting to introduce the scheme.

3. Class Spelling Book

A variation on the above, which could run alongside personal books, is a class spelling book. You need a folder or exercise book divided alphabetically, with some words already in place. When pupils ask for spellings all but the most esoteric should be entered in the book, as well as in the pupil's own book. After a time there will be a substantial number of entries, and pupils will get used to consulting this before they ask the teacher.

4. Parents

Parents will inevitably and quite rightly ask how they can help. The personal spelling book provides one opportunity. In addition parents need from schools the sort of information about helping with spelling that is given in the area of reading by PACT schemes. Above all, parents need to be reassured that helping with spelling is a positive activity, and not cheating.

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5. Dictionaries

Ideally all pupils should be provided with a dictionary when they enter the school, though there are problems (other than financial) with this strategy. Different pupils need different dictionaries, and this is obviously a sensitive issue to which departments should give some thought. We certainly need to have information to advise parents on the best dictionary for their child, and as a minimum we should have a selection of dictionaries of differing levels of difficulty, and some thesauruses, in each English classroom. Black's Spelling Dictionary is useful.

6. Underlining

One way of ensuring that dictionaries do not merely gather dust in the corner is for teachers to underline in pencil a selection of misspelt words in pupils' writing, rather than simply writing out a corrected version. Pupils can then look up the correct version in a relevant dictionary.

Pupils can also be encouraged to underline. After finishing a first draft they should read through and underline any words whose spelling seems dubious to them. These can then be checked in a dictionary, or with a neighbour. An occasional variation is for pupils to do this to each others work, though only after they have read, and commented on, the content.

7. The 'Blitz' Method

One way of dealing with common mistakes in spelling is to shine a spotlight on them for a week or two. You could announce that this week is, for example, YOUR/THEIR, HERE/THERE week, and that the use of these words is to have a high profile. You will be looking out for their correct use. Posters and handouts can accompany the campaign. This is not a method for every week, but can be surprisingly successful if used occasionally.

8. Memory Strategies

Although the senseless learning of lists is a discredited method of improving spelling, the learning of personally difficult words still has a place. We need to provide children with strategies for doing this, and also to remember that different people have different ways of committing things to memory. The strategies are not difficult to devise, but it should be emphasised that words are best learnt by looking, covering and then writing out, rather than copying it. It is also a good idea to discuss with each pupil their particular methods of remembering words.

John Stephens

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Activity 4.1 – Call My Bluff

Level – Intermediate to Advanced

Time – 20 - 30 minutes

Preparation – Ensure that you have sufficient monolingual dictionaries available; one for each group of 3-4 players. Any monolingual dictionary will do, though for more advanced students the various learners' dictionaries may be less stimulating. Pocket dictionaries will not be adequate.

In Class –

1. Ask the students to form groups of 3-4 players each. Make sure each group has a dictionary.
2. Ask each group to select one word from the dictionary which they think will be unknown to the rest of the class.
3. Within each group one player should then write down a correct definition of the word (copied or adapted from the dictionary), while the other players write down *false* definitions.
4. Pair the groups to play the game:
   a. Group A tells Group B the word they have chosen.
   b. Each player in Group A reads out his or her definition of the word.
   c. Each player in Group B judges which definition is correct, and which are bluffs; they then try to achieve consensus among themselves.
   d. The members of Group B announce their choice to Group A.
   e. Group B now tells Group A the word they have chosen and the game continues.

While groups A and B are playing together, C and D, E and F, etc. are doing the same thing.

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Activity 4.2 - Lose a Life

Level	-	Beginner to Advanced
Time	-	10 - 15 minutes
Letter by Letter	-	Player A says a letter. Player B thinks of a word beginning with A's letter and says its second letter. C thinks of a word beginning with the two letters already given and says its third letter, and so on round the circle. The person who, in saying a letter, completes a word, loses and must drop out (or lose a life). If a player, on *his/her* turn, thinks that the combination offered so far cannot lead to a word, s/he may challenge the previous player to say the word s/he is thinking of: if there is no such word, that player loses a life, otherwise the challenger is penalised. The game continues until only one player is left. For example:

A: *d*	A: *s*
B: *o (—> dog)*	B: *h (—> shrigle)*
C: *l (—> doll)*	C: *r (—> Christ)*
D: *t (—> dollop)*	D: *o (—> chromium)*
E: *Didn't a word!*	E: *That's not possible what's your word?*
D loses a life	D: *<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<*
	E loses a life

Tail to Head (1) - A thinks of a word and says it aloud. It has to say a word that begins with the last letter of A's word, then C a word beginning with the last letter of B's word, and so on round the circle until someone makes a mistake, or cannot find a word. (A time limit of, say, five seconds per player makes this more exciting).

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Activity 4.3 - Write Yourself In

Level - Elementary to Advanced

Time - 10 - 15 minutes

Preparation - From a text or other current source of vocabulary, select (or ask the students to select) 6-12 words.

In Class -

1. Ask the students, working individually, to look up each of the words in their dictionaries. When they have read the entry and any example sentences given, they should construct example sentences for that word which include their own names, or references to themselves.

2. In small groups, the students complete their example sentences.

Variation - This exercise can easily be adapted as a pair exercise by asking the pairs to write sentences that apply to both members, e.g.

cont: We are both opposed to the production of nuclear weapons.

Activity 4.4 - Theme Alphabets

Theme Alphabets -

A chooses a category (sites in and names you) member beginning with 'A', e.g. 'Buildings'. A is for Acropolis'. B next find a building beginning with 'B', e.g. 'B is for Bank', and so on round the circle. ('Hard' letters such as Q and X can be omitted if wished).

1. Ask the students to form groups of 2-4 players each. Make sure each group has a dictionary.

2. Explain or demonstrate the game, then ask the groups to play one complete round. The game goes like this:

   a. Player A opens the dictionary at random.

   b. S/he chooses an unknown word defined on the pages open and tells the other player(s) what it is. (It may be helpful to insist that A both pronounces the word and spells it out. A may also give other information, such as part of speech, but not meaning.)

   c. The other players then question A on the meaning of the word. A may answer only yes or no.

   d. A scores a point if no one guesses the meaning within, say, twenty questions. Otherwise the first person to guess the meaning gets the point.

- Two or three rounds should be the maximum to sustain interest: if the students wish to continue, then repeat the game on a later occasion.

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Sample 4:05 : PUNCTUATION POINTS

There are at least three reasons which may be behind pupils' failure to punctuate a piece of writing properly. They may genuinely lack knowledge of how the punctuation system operates. They may, for the time being, be unconcerned for the niceties of technicalities when their main interests is in getting ideas on to paper as fast as possible. Or they may have built up an active resistance to punctuation as a result of too many requests from teachers to improve it. The following list is a mixture of points of principle and classroom tips about the teaching of punctuation.

1. Punctuation, in common with other features of control of the writing system, is most effectively learned in the context of the needs writers demonstrate in their own texts.

2. Teaching punctuation should principally consist of introducing pupils to examples of correct practice.

3. The first two points do not, however, intend to say that it is only possible to talk to one pupil at a time about punctuation, or that it is only the pupil's own texts which can be used as the subject-matter for teaching. We might decide that a number of pupils are having a similar difficulty, and need to have their attention drawn to a particular feature of punctuation at the same time; and that they might benefit from seeing other people's texts. 'Other people' might be other pupils, the teacher or published authors.

4. The full stop is the best example of the importance of the principles outlined in 1, 2 and 3. The way NOT to teach the full stop is to attempt to define a sentence. Pupils learn to mark sentences by:

   - extensive experience of reading
   - being asked to read their own work critically ('Look, you've got six places on this page where you haven't marked the sentences properly. Can you find them?')
   - being asked to do the same thing for each other
   - receiving instruction from the teacher which illustrates rather than theorizes. ('This is the way to mark three sentences on your piece. And have a look at the way so-and-so does it').

5. Pupils need to be helped to see that punctuation matters because of the contribution it makes to meeting the needs of a reader. When writers read their own texts **aloud**, they become a different kind of reader, because reading aloud makes demands on the reader as a performer, even when they are only performing for themselves. These extra demands make them far more dependent on the props in the text. The importance of punctuation as one of these props is thereby raised to a higher level of consciousness. If writers know that their work is going to be read aloud to other people, or displayed or published, the expected needs of these listeners and readers raise consciousness of the importance of punctuation still further.

6. A short collection of examples of the **main features** of punctuation in use, brought together on a sheet and stuck at the back of a pupil's folder, makes for easy reference.

7. **Pupil-made punctuation posters**, involving concrete poetry-style graphics, provide entertaining occasional reinforcement lessons and make useful wall displays.

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Sample 4:06 : COHESIVE WRITING DEVICES : Twelve Logical Sentence Connectors for Writers

For ease of reference, the logical connectors listed below are given in alphabetical order. Some examples are also provided.

1) Addition

again	equally	in fact
also	further (more)	moreover
and	in addition (to...)	too
and then	indeed	what is more
besides		

Examples:

The house faces north, so it never gets the sun. *Also,* it is rather damp.

The children do not like one another. *Moreover,* they often quarrel and start to fight.

She hardly ever goes to the theatre. *In fact,* she has not been for months.

2) Comparison

compared with	in the same way	similarly
in comparison with	likewise	

Examples:

I used to work fifteen hours a day. *In comparison with that,* my present job is more like a holiday!

The doctor advised him to give up smoking. *Similarly,* he recommended him to eat much less and take plenty of exercise.

3) Contrast and Concession*

besides	naturally	still
but	nevertheless	whereas
however	of course	while
in contrast	on the contrary	yet
instead	on the other hand	

*Some of these items imply both contrast and concession (for example: however), while others, such as *on the contrary, on the other hand,* are more clearly concerned with contrastive relationships between sentences. On the whole, however, it seemed more convenient to subsume these items under one heading.

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Examples:

He did not show anyone the papers. *Instead,* as soon as he got a chance, he burnt them.

She is not as pretty as she used to be. *Nevertheless,* she is still a very attractive girl.

His first novel took him only a few weeks to write, *while* his next one took over a year.

4) Enumeration

first(ly) (second(ly), etc.)	last	on top of (that)
finally	next	to (begin with)
in the (first) place	more important	then

Examples:

His job involves a number of things. *First,* he is responsible for general administration in the office. *Secondly,* he has to look after the financial side of the business .... *Finally,* he has been asked to build up outside contacts.

There were several good reasons for changing the plan. *To begin with,* it involved a lot of money. *On top of that,* it needed too many people.

5) Exemplification

as (evidence of ...)	such as
for example	thus
for instance	to show what (I mean)
let us (take the case of ....)	

Examples:

Most countries do not grow enough food for their needs. *Let us take the case* of the United Kingdom.

Most people are superstitious in some way. *Thus,* a lot of people believe that the number 13 is unlucky .....

6) Inference

if not, ...	otherwise	then
in (that) case	that implies	

Examples:

He left the country the same day. *In that case,* he must have had his passport with him.

You must get some more petrol. *Otherwise,* we will not have enough to get us to the next town.

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7) Summary

in all	in short	on the whole
in brief	in conclusion	to sum up

Examples:

She spends a lot of money on clothes. She is also fond of buying expensive jewellery. *In short,* she is extremely extravagant.

The car is not new but it is in good condition. The price too is very reasonable. *On the whole,* I think it is quite a good bargain.

The film has a very unusual plot, with plenty of action. Both the acting and photography are excellent. *To sum up,* this is a film you should not miss.

8) Time*

after (a while)	before (that time)	since (then)
afterwards	finally	so far
at first	in the end	then (up to) (then)
at last	meanwhile	
at (the same time)	next	

Examples:

He tried to open one of the small windows. *At first* it remained firmly closed but, *in the end,* after a great deal of effort, he managed to open it a few inches.

... and the fire has finally been brought under control. Several men are still missing. *Meanwhile* the causes of the explosion are still being investigated.

*That is, indicating temporal relationships. This is a very open-ended group of devices, as the number of bracketed items shows. For example, instead of *at the same time,* we have: *at that time/at that moment.*

9) Result

accordingly	for that reason	then
as a result	hence	therefore
consequently	the (consequence) of that is ...	thus

Examples:

Most people were opposed to the scheme on the grounds that it was too expensive. *Accordingly,* it is now being re-examined to see if costs can be reduced.

Seven inches of snow fell during the night, blocking most main roads. *As a result,* traffic conditions have been chaotic.

In the past, no one has taken his advice very seriously. *Hence,* it is very probable that he will not be inclined to help on this occasion.

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10) Reformulation

in other words	that is (to say)
rather	to put it more (simply)

Examples:

Towards the end of the party he got up and danced on the table. *In other words,* he made a complete fool of himself.

Most people felt that the project was not worthwhile in proportion to the amount of time it would take to complete it and equally the financial expenditure involved. *To put it more simply,* it was a waste of time and money.

11) Replacement

again	(better) still	the alternative is .....
alternatively	on the other hand	

Examples:

It is very likely that we shall go by car, even though it is a long drive, because we shall need some means of transport while we are there. *Alternatively,* we might fly out and hire a car when we arrive.

If things get any worse, we might have to arrange a public meeting to discuss the matter. *Better still,* we could even organise a demonstration.

12) Transition

as far as ..... is concerned	now
as for	to turn to .....
incidentally	with (reference) to ....

Examples:

We can leave most of the details of the proposal until the next meeting. *Now, as far as* money *is concerned,* this needs careful consideration.

In the end, he decided to sell his car. This, *incidentally,* proved to be a mistake.

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Sample 4:07 : Expressing Comparison and Contrast : A Specimen Unit

An example of a unit of work, dealing with comparison and contrast, is given below. While it is not suggested that the content is suitable for all types of learners, the procedures are likely to be of general validity. Thus, the students are first exposed to a text which exemplifies the various items of language needed to express comparison and contrast. Their attention is drawn to the key items, which include some alternative forms, although it is not suggested that the students are being given any more than a 'basic kit'. As a second stage, they are given opportunities for using these items orally, so that they can explore their use in a fairly flexible way. At this stage, certain difficulties show up which were not perhaps anticipated through the reading text. Finally, the students are given an appropriate writing task, which shows how the function of comparison and contrast relates to a specific communicative purpose.

Activity 4.5 - Comparing Two Towns from a Report

1. Study the language of comparison and contrast in the report below.

KEY LANGUAGE	REPORT ON EXHEAD AND PORTSEA
In many ways/in some respects/to some extent, *alike*/similar, *both, each, like, similarly*/*likewise*/in the same way, *but, dissimilar*/different/unlike, *compared with*/in comparison with, *while, on the other hand, unlike, difference between, however*/in contrast/on the contrary	Exhead and Portsea are two towns on the south coast which are *in many ways* very much *alike*. They are *both* old towns and *each* has a large harbour. *Like* Portsea, Exhead has a population of approximately 120,000. It also has a growing number of local industries. *Similarly,* Portsea is expanding on the industrial front, too. *But* in other respects the two towns are quite *dissimilar.* For one thing, *compared with* Portsea, Exhead is a much more attractive place. For this reason it is a popular holiday resort in summer, *while* Portsea, *on the other hand,* attracts very few visitors. *Unlike* Portsea, Exhead has extended its hotel facilities because of the tourist trade. One striking *difference between* the two towns is that Exhead has located its new industries on an estate outside the town. In Portsea, *however,* there are even factories near the harbour.

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Activity 4.6 - Comparing People from a Bio-Sheet

2. For the next stage, the students are given a bio-data cue-sheet and work in pairs, contrasting and comparing any two of the people described. For example, they make statements like: *In many ways, J H Smith and A P Wheeler are very much alike. They were both born in 1939, they are both married,* etc. Or: *Compared with Michael Webb, Andrew Wheeler is a rich man!*

   Notice that, at this stage, the students have to *identify* the points of comparison and contrast, as well as *use* the appropriate language.

1

Name	John Henry Smith
Date of Birth	December 6 1939
Marital status	Married 2 children (1 son, 1 daughter)
Occupation	Teacher
Income	£10,400 p.a.
Car	Ford Sierra (1983 model)
Sports	tennis, golf
Other interests	travelling, theatre, photography, chess, stamp collecting

2

Name	Michael Webb
Date of birth	December 12 1955
Marital status	Single
Occupation	Teacher
Income	£7000 p.a.
Car	Fiat Strada (1986 model)
Sports	None
Other interests	dancing, travelling

3

Name	Andrew Peter Wheeler
Date of birth	April 1 1939
Marital status	Married 5 children (4 sons, 1 daughter)
Occupation	Architect
Income	£18900
Car	Ford Sierra (1986 model)
Sports	golf
Other interests	photography

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Activity 4.7 - Comparing Cars from a Table of Numbers

3. For their final task, the students are given data in tabular form. They are asked to write a report on one of the cars in each of the two groups, recommending this car as the 'best buy'. They have to compare and contrast this car with other ones in the same group, where this is appropriate.

	FIAT Panda 750	VAUXHALL Nova	RENAULT TL	FORD Fiesta 950
Price (£)	3390	4186	4805	4201
Cubic capacity (cm^3)	769	993	1108	957
Length (ft., in)	11 1	13 0	11 9	12 0
No. of seats	4	4	4	4
M.p.g.	45	37	48	40
Max. speed m.p.h.	78	89	89	85

	BMW 316	CITROEN CX 20	ROVER 216SE	VOLVO 240GL
Price (£)	7795	9149	7509	8960
Cubic capacity (cm^3)	1766	1995	1598	2316
Length (ft., in.)	14 2	15 3	13 8	15 8
No. of seats	4	5	4	4
M.p.g.	26	23	32	21
Max. speed m.p.h.	108	110	102	110

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Sample 4:08 : Organising Points for a Contrast and Comparison Essay

Activity 4.8 - Town and Country Life

Level - **Upper Intermediate to Advanced**

Topic - **Town and Country Life**

Function - Contrast and Comparison.

Form - Composition of the Examination Type.

Focus - Discourse Organisation.

Context - Preparation for an Examination Question:

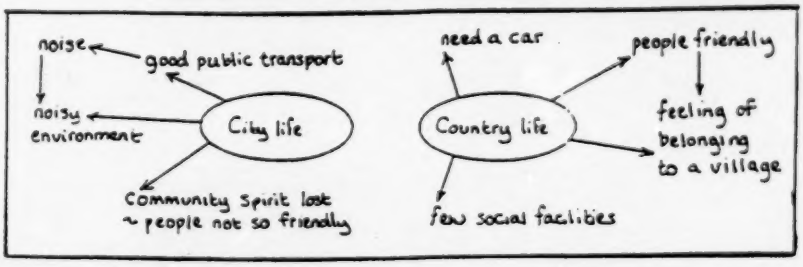
> 'The country has everything that is good in life; the city all that is bad.'

Preparation - In this activity you may wish to prepare the content needed for the essay as a list of points about town and country life. Make copies of the list for students. These can be used for a matching and sorting task during the lesson.

Town	Country
– lack of green spaces, e.g. parks and gardens; lots of concrete and bricks	– community spirit still exists
– plenty of amenities for entertainment, e.g. theatres, cinemas, sports clubs	– children may have to travel to school
– good public transport	– need a private car
– difficulty of making contacts	– open space and greenery
– claustrophobia and crowds	– few social facilities – travel necessary for entertainment
– noisy environment	– can be too quiet and isolated
– people not so friendly	– no supermarkets or specialized shops
– good shopping facilities	– social life easier to establish in community
– good education services	– solitude for those who want it

In Class

1. Give students the title for the essay and explain that in this case the audience will be an examiner. They are to prepare a more formal type of academic composition.
2. Ask students to work for four to five minutes individually, jotting down ideas for the composition in the form of a mind map. You could start one together on the blackboard using the format below if students are not used to this kind of note-making activity.



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3. Elicit suggestions for content from the class and add them to the mind map on the blackboard.

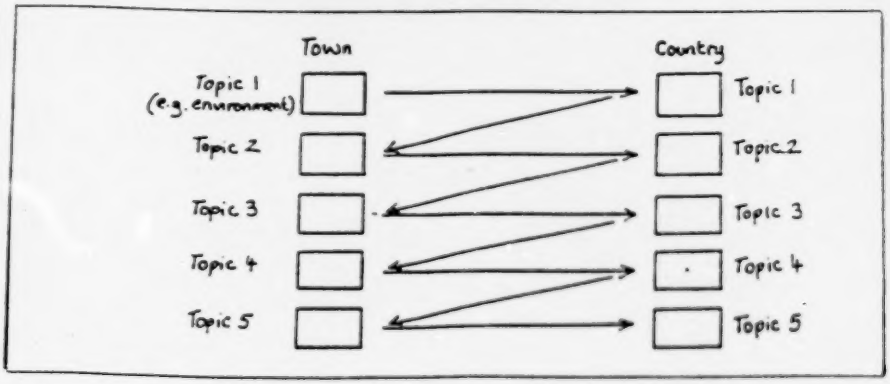
4. Give out your copies of points for and against town and country. (This is a linear equivalent of the mind map.) Ask students to add any new points from the blackboard and any further points of their own.

5. Then ask the students to match points from each column which relate to the same topic (as shown by the arrows in the list above). This can be done individually or in pairs.

6. While checking the matching task with the whole class, discuss labels for the topics which have been identified: environment, social amenities, transport, etc.

7. Working with the class, decide on a sensible order for the topics. Looking back at their mind maps and any links between ideas may suggest ways of linking the topics together.

8. The next step is to show students a possible organisation for their composition. As this composition involves quite a number of topics, an 'interwoven' organisation is appropriate. It can be shown by drawing a diagram as follows:



9. Students can then move to the process of drafting.

Remarks - Planning for a contrast and comparison composition is particularly important for two reasons. The first is that, in thinking about the topic, ideas occur randomly and must be related and organised in a logical way. Secondly, the content is complex and its organisation needs to be worked out before drafting starts and the student begins to think about language as well. For this reason, in the task above, the students are given a chance to 'get their ideas together' through making mind maps. The move to linear notes helps them then to sort out the overall discourse structure.

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Sample 4:09 : Reformulating a Paragraph

The following task is intended to help students understand the relationship between different sentences in a paragraph. It focuses their attention on the functional framework of a paragraph within a whole text. It then asks them to reformulate the paragraph in a slightly different way. As they do this, they will have to consider both the logical development of the ideas and the ways in which ideas are linked together through cohesive devices.

Activity 4.9 - Renewable Energy

Level - **Upper Intermediate**

Topic - **Renewable Energy**

Function - Review as part of an argument.

Form - Extract from a brochure which seeks to inform and persuade.

Focus - Developing information through a paragraph.

Preparation - You need to make copies of the text and the task sheet.

In Class -

1. Take the title of the text, 'Renewable Energy', and write it on the blackboard. Ask students to explain what it means and to give examples of some kinds of renewable energy. Ask them if they know what the source of energy is in their own home.
2. Ask students to read the first three paragraphs of the text and to make a list of all the types of energy source that are mentioned. Check through these.
3. Ask the students to work in pairs. They are to read the last paragraph and to do the first part of the task together.
4. Check through the numbered sentences of the task with the class.
5. Ask them individually to try the second part of the task. When they have drafted out their own paragraphs they can compare with partners and see what differences there are. They can also comment on and suggest improvements to the first draft.
6. It can be very useful for a later lesson to photocopy some of the completed paragraphs and to discuss with the class the different cohesive devices they have used.

Text - Read the text and then do the task that follows it.

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Renewable Energy

The sun is the source of all life on earth and provides us with almost all the energy we use. Fossil fuels, such as gas, oil, and coal, are simply stored solar energy; the product of photosynthesis millions of years ago; while the renewable energy sources, solar, wind, tidal, wave, biomass, and hydro are all the direct result of the sun's energy.

More energy arrives at the earth's surface in an hour than is consumed in the world in a whole year. Even in cloudy northern countries like Britain there is more than enough solar energy for our needs. The total falling on Britain every year is more than one hundred times greater than all the energy used.

This energy can be used to heat buildings either directly (passive solar energy) or by use of solar collectors (active solar energy). The sun is also responsible for rain, which can be harnessed as hydro-power. Falling or flowing water generates 25% of the world's electricity. Waves are the result of winds over the ocean, and ways of harnessing this new source of energy are being developed at present, while the complex interaction of earth, moon and sun, results in the tides, which can also be used to produce electricity.

The official view in Britain is that renewable sources of energy such as these will be unable to provide more than a small proportion of our needs until well into the next century. But such pessimistic predictions are directly linked to the lack of money for research and development.. In 1983/84 for example, only £11.3 million was spent on all the renewable sources of energy put together, while £206 million was given to the development of nuclear power. Some renewable sources, such as solar and wind energy, are already cost-effective and working well today. However, these are not being taken up by industry or the general public, due to lack of information on what is available, and financial incentives. We need to develop many of the more promising renewable energy options now if we are to ensure that the world has enough energy to take us through to the new century.

Task Sheet

1. Look again at the last paragraph of the text. In what order does the author do these things? Write the sequence of numbers (1-6) in the boxes.

   ☐ Make a general statement of future needs.

   ☐ Describe the current level of development of renewable energy sources.

   ☐ Support an argument with an example.

   ☐ Give arguments against negative predictions.

   ☐ Criticize the official attitude towards development.

   ☐ Describe official predictions.

2. In what order would you do these things if you began the paragraph like this:

   Some forms of renewable energy, such as solar and wind energy, are already cost effective and working well today.

   Would you:

   a. Decide on a general order?

   b. Rewrite the paragraph and, as you draft it, decide whether you need to reword sentences or add anything in order to create a clear and convincing argument?

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Sample 4:10 : How Can We Help? - Examples of Correcting Work Individually

Miles & Chapman

Activity 4.10 - Husnara

Biographical Detail

Husnara is 13 years old. She comes from Bangladesh, is literate in Bengali, and writes quite confidently in her first language. She has lived in this country for approximately 15 months and attends the Language Centre for three half-day sessions a week.

Before attempting to write anything we again read 'models' provided by the teacher, and other bilingual writers, including Bangladeshi pupils. We also listened to taped stories of their journeys to England.

My Journey to England

I come[1] from Bangladesh to England because my relatives [2]in England. We had seen my relatives six years. We came to England [3]we seen my relative, we[d] are happy about coming. I didn't get to school for about three months because my father [a] can't find a girls school [b] for me. I started school. This school is good. a [c] girls helps me in my class. They helps me at work. They talk to me. They like me.[4] They say good girl we are friends. They say "don't worry we helps you". I[5] happy at school. I get up at seven o'clock. I[6] were ready for school by eight o'clock. School finished [7] at 3.30. Then I come to [e] home. I tell my mother school [8] good. They helps me. The teacher is good too. In holidays come me and my sisters and my brothers, we go to my cousin's house. I can speak English little bit. We[9] very happy in England.

(Letters = Husnara's corrections, numbers = Teacher's corrections).

When correcting Husnara's work I was selective and did not correct all the errors. It would be far too discouraging to do this. Instead, I focussed on a) the different and appropriate usage of the Past and Simple Present Tenses and b) missing verbs particularly Present and Past forms of the verb 'to be'.

With some students it is *desirable* to sit and go through their written work with them, but in Husnara's case it is *essential.*

Errors

1. **'Come from'**

   Husnara wrote this because she was thinking of the question "Where do you come from?" - a very common question, asked many times of bilingual pupils, so this mistake is understandable.

2. **'My relatives in England'**

   T: What's missing? Can you say my relatives *in* England?

   H: My relatives *are* living in England?

   T: That's right, Husnara. (Many writers would have used 'were' in this context, but it would have been inappropriate to explain this more sophisticated use at this stage).

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3. **'Seen my relatives'**

T: Who did you see when you came to England?

H: I saw ....

(she corrected herself)

4. **'We are happy about coming'**

This is another example of where a mother tongue speaker of English would probably have used 'were'.

5. **'I happy'**

T: Is there anything missing here? Do we say, I happy? I sad? I unhappy?

H: No, I *am* happy.

T: Yes, that's right, good

6. **'I were ready for school'**

T: Let's read this again. I get up at seven o'clock. I *were* ready for school. School *finished* at 3.30. Then I *come* home.

Do you want to change anything? If we are talking about something that happens everyday, every week, every year, what do we say or write? Do we say school *starts* or started at nine o'clock every day.

H: *starts*

7. **'School finished at 3.30'**

T: Good, Well, let's look at school *finished* at 3.30. Do you want to change it?

H: Yes - finishes

T: That's good What about I *were* ready for school by eight o'clock. Do you think it's right?

H: No, I *am* ready.

T: That's right, good.

8. **'School - good'**

T: Is there anything missing?

Can we say 'School good?' 'The girl good?' 'The boy good?'

H: No, the girl is good.

T: So what do we put in here?

H: The school *is* good.

T: Yes, that's fine.

9. **'We - very happy in England'**

T: What do you mean? We very happy in England?

H: I am very happy.

T: So, here we put 'we *are* very happy'.

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To reinforce this focusing on Past and Present Tense and omission of verbs the next time she hands in some work she could be asked to check through her work. This could be done by saying something like the following: "Now, just check through again Husnara. Is there anything missing? Last time you wrote things like I happy not I am or I was happy. Do you remember? In your story did you write about what you did a long time ago, or about what you do everyday? Look over your work and see if you want to change anything.

One of the very positive things about Husnara's writing and one which we would want to encourage is that she is beginning to monitor her own work. I asked her how she did this and she said she had read it aloud. This could be extended and encouraged by getting the pupils to read and monitor each other's work.

Some examples of Husnara's attempts at self-corrections

a) **'couldn't' crossed out to 'can't**

she has seen the link but got it wrong. I gave her some examples verbally like - 'Yesterday I was ill so I *couldn't* go the school,' 'I *can't* come to your house today because my Auntie is coming from Bangladesh.

b) **'or a good school from'**

This was crossed out because she wasn't happy about it but I explained that she could have left it in.

c) **'a girl helps me'**

Importantly, she got the plural subject correct but the agreement with 'a' wrong. She was confused whether or not she meant one or more girls, but went on to use plural *they* in the next sentence. Therefore, she made one correction but left the verb with the wrong agreement.

However, it is doubtful that at this stage she has acquired the notion of third person(s) agreement as she has used (s) in the we, they, forms also.

Again, some verbal examples were given but as this structure is acquired relatively late in second language acquisition it would probably have little effect.

d) **'They are say good girl you we are friends'**

She was not happy with structure of this sentence and changed it quite satisfactorily by using direct speech.

e) **'Then I come to home'**

After reading through her work made an appropriate correction.

In Husnara's case, therefore, it is a question of being selective in correcting her work and of going through the corrections with her to enable her to focus on similar mistakes when monitoring her own written work.

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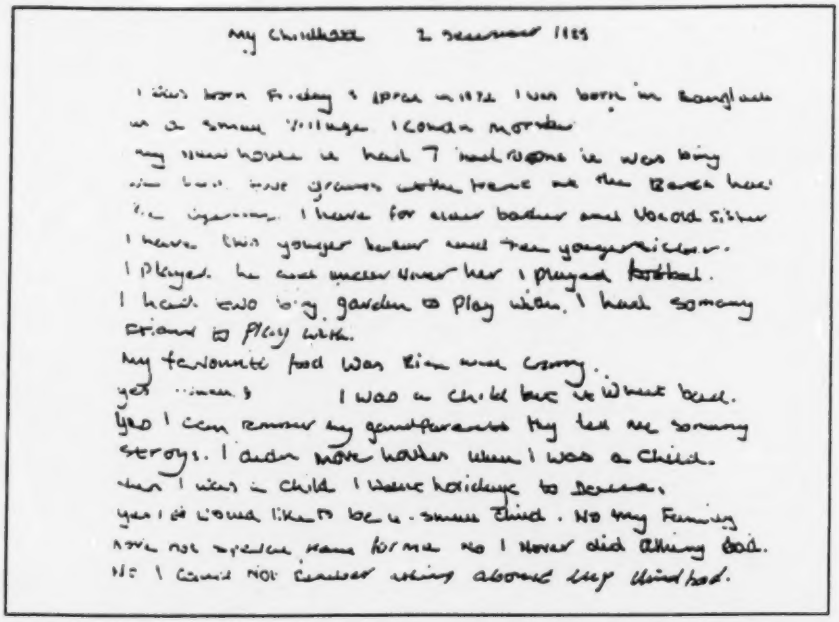
Toffazul

Biographical Details

Toffazul is 13 years old. He has attended primary school in this country but has literacy problems in both English and his home language, Bengali.

Example of his written work:



my childhood 2 [illegible] 1985

I was born Friday 5 [illegible] I was born in Bangla
in a small village I [illegible] mother
my own house is [illegible] I had [illegible] is was big
[illegible] grown with trees and then [illegible] here
[illegible] I have for elder brother and [illegible] sister
I have two younger brother and two younger sister.
I played. he and [illegible] her I played football.
I had big garden to play with. I had so many
friend to play with.
my favourite food was [illegible] curry.
yes [illegible] I was a child but [illegible].
yes I can remember my grandparents they tell me so many
storys. I [illegible] more happy when I was a child.
when I was a child I have holidays to [illegible].
yes I [illegible] like to be a small child. No my Family
[illegible] special name for me no I never did [illegible].
No I could not remember [illegible] my childhood.

Toffazul lacks confidence as a writer and reader of English. He is a good example of someone who when given 'models' and questions to support his writing, will nearly always choose the questions. Because he has used these questions to guide him in building up his story, it is structurally fairly correct.

The focus here should be on trying to build on what he has already done - to improve. To do this, it is important to read through his story. We focused on just a few items;

joining sentences up; correcting spelling; and to working out ways of giving his writing greater fluidity. In an attempt to do this one could ask the following:

1) Can we join these two sentences together? Does it sound better now?

2) **No, I never did anything bad:**

   Can we write this in a better way, to make it sound like part of a story, and not just an answer to the question?

3) Which words do you think are different from the teacher's spelling?

4) Which words would you like to know how to spell?

Toffazul's writing is similar to that of many monolingual English-speaking pupils in that it lacks fluency. The aim is to try and improve it by drawing his attention to specific items. This should enable him to focus on these areas for himself when he is next writing. The teacher should also do this when marking his work next time.

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Speakers of certain languages will tend consistently to make certain errors. For example, Cantonese and Vietnamese speakers will omit the past tense marker and plural endings. In the space of this article it is impossible to explore these language-specific features. However, an English teacher will obviously become aware of any specific and re-occurring errors in pupils' work and could try some of the methods outlined in this article to focus upon them.

Ann Miles

Stella Chapman

Lambeth Language Centre.

SUMMARY

We all know as teachers that it is easier to grade papers than it is to mark papers. If we teach children to use the writing process as applied to their own writing, then we have come a long way in getting them to be more critical writers (and readers). This chapter provided some excellent examples and activities designed to help students to be better writers and better editors of their own and each others work. Understanding important mechanical skills such as dialect, grammar, spelling, punctuation, dictionary use and cohesive writing strategies should be an integrated not separate process when children write both fiction and non-fiction.

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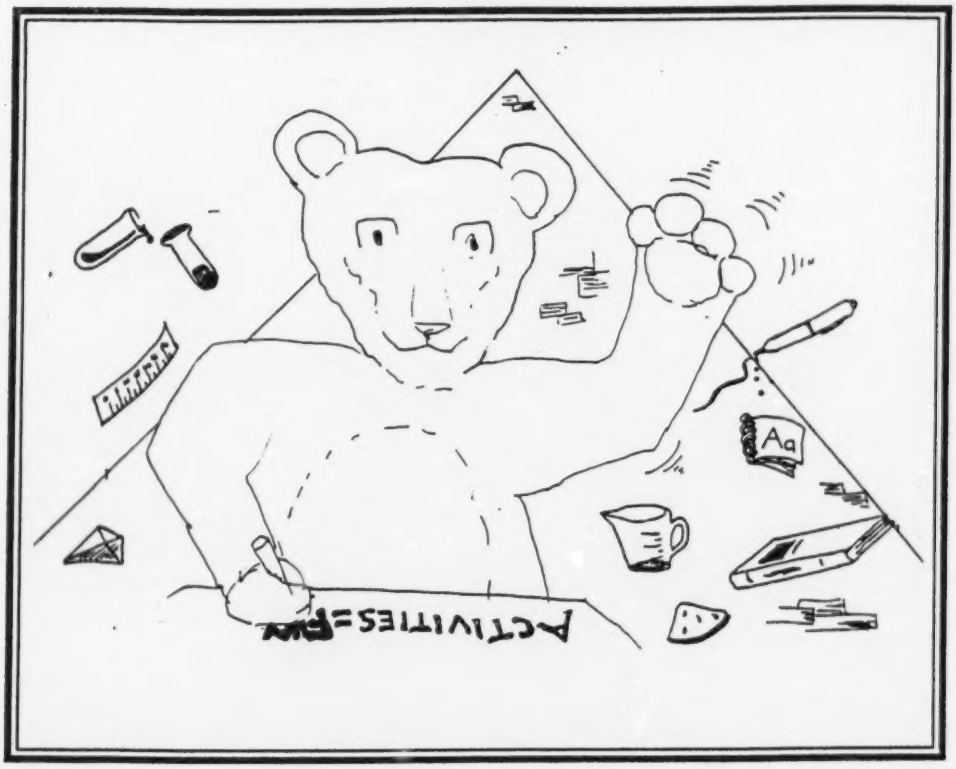
CHAPTER 5

IDEAS FOR WORKING WITH LESS ACADEMICALLY ABLE STUDENTS



Contents:

- Introduction
- Workshop Ideas for Working with Students with Reading Difficulties Across the Curriculum
- Activities for Listening, Speaking and Drama Across the Curriculum
- Encouraging Reading and Writing in Your Literature Class
- Additional Activities for Science and Maths
- Summary

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5. IDEAS FOR WORKING WITH LESS ACADEMICALLY ABLE STUDENTS

INTRODUCTION

WORKSHOP IDEAS FOR WORKING WITH STUDENTS WITH READING DIFFICULTIES ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

- Preface
- Attitudes
- Grouping the Students
- Twelve Non-Reading Ideas
- Five Practical Activities
- Reading and Writing Ideas
- Practical Activities
- Evaluation/Marking/Testing

ACTIVITIES FOR LISTENING, SPEAKING AND DRAMA ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

- Encouraging Oral Participation
- The Importance of Questioning
- Kinds of Questions
- Effective Questioning Techniques
- Drama/Role Plays: Developing Maths, Language and Oral Speaking Skills
- 101 Ways to Write a Book Report

ENCOURAGING READING AND WRITING IN YOUR LITERATURE CLASS

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR SCIENCE AND MATHS

- From Copying to Comprehension in Science
- Language Strategies for Teaching Biology
- Reading/Writing Experiments
- Scrambled Text for a Science Experiment
- Explaining an Abstract Concept in Chemistry or Physics
- Using Language in Mathematics

SUMMARY

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5. IDEAS FOR WORKING WITH LESS ACADEMICALLY ABLE STUDENTS

INTRODUCTION

This final chapter of the book includes at least eighteen varied curricular activities for active teachers and their students. The first section focuses on students with reading difficulties and summarises ideas and classroom activities resulting from a workshop on that topic. The second section discusses ways to encourage reading and writing in secondary literature or language arts classes. It includes at least 101 ways to write a book report. The third section focuses on oral participation and questioning techniques. It highlights activities designed for listening, speaking and drama across the curriculum. The final section of the chapter explains additional activities teachers could use to develop language skills in the areas of science and maths. All of these activities have been developed by teachers for teachers so I'm sure you will find them useful when planning your various lessons.

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WORKSHOP IDEAS FOR WORKING WITH STUDENTS WITH READING DIFFICULTIES ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Preface

These children are the responsibility of all teachers and not just the learning support/'remedial' teacher.

Here is an extract from a workshop given to a Caribbean High School where most of the teachers taught the lower stream students (called the A5 students) for some periods a week.

There are also examples of useful non-reading and reading activities that can be used with students of varied reading abilities.

Attitudes

A5 students are generally students with learning difficulties (this usually means they did not acquire all the skills necessary to become competent readers in primary school). This does not mean they are of low intelligence or lazy. Remember that teachers of today are the **successful** school students of yesterday and we cannot judge all children by our own achievements.

A5 students may not leave school with CXC's, but we can inspire them to achieve at their own pace; encourage their interest in the world around them; and help them to build up the basic skills they need to 'get on' in society i.e. basic literacy and numeracy.

By building our teaching around what the students **can** do (and not around what we **wish** they **could** do), the students will understand better what is expected of them and be more able to fulfil those expectations.

If we all make an attempt and ensure that the A5 students have a complete timetable, we will create a structure and consistency for them which will encourage the students to feel a more meaningful part of school life (discipline will therefore seem to them, a more acceptable part of that life).

A5 students deserve as much effort as any other student. But this does not mean being 'soft' with them. We should expect good standards of behaviour from A5 students, but we should also expect good standards of teaching from ourselves.

A5 is the 'final landing place' for children i.e. if they cannot achieve in that class there is nowhere else for them to go. This means there is a wide range of ability in the classes. Teaching just to the most able students will only frustrate the others and create problems. The solution is to group the children according to ability.

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Grouping the Students

The groups I have organised for the A5 classes are a result of reading tests and continual assessment. I would advise curriculum subject teachers to use these groups whenever they are asking students to take part in any reading/writing activity.

Maths teachers may find they need to group the students differently. A simple test should help you to decide.

The Red Group

These are the more able students in the A5 classes. We may call them the **'slow'** readers. They are usually able, with support, to complete simple 'mainstream' activities, as long as they know what is expected of them and any difficult concept or vocabulary are explained carefully to them.

The Green Group

These students are still struggling with the skills necessary to read. They have a limited reading vocabulary. We may call them the **'poor'** readers. This group will need to have the vocabulary of your subject re-enforced. All language work should be kept fairly simple.

The Blue Group

These children still do not have all the skills necessary to read and have an extremely limited reading vocabulary. We may call them the **'non-readers'**.

These students need to have their vocabulary created. The subject teacher can assist the remedial teacher by adding a few important words from their subject area to the students' reading vocabulary.

Non-reading/writing activities are very important for this group.

The groups can also be used to encourage good behaviour. Students are naturally competitive and highlighting the good effort of one group will often bring the others into line (especially in 1A5).

In non-reading/writing activities you can have group competitions, e.g. a group quiz about a topic that has been discussed. The blue group children will not necessarily do badly when no reading is involved.

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Twelve Non-Reading Ideas

These activities can be used with any group. Most especially with the non-readers. But non-reading activities can also be successful with the whole class, cutting down on time allotted to reading and writing activities.

Here are twelve suggestions:

1. reading to the class
2. discussion
3. question/answer
4. debate
5. drama
6. demonstrations
7. drawing activities-pictures, diagrams, maps, graphs
8. hands on activities-making models, doing experiments
9. games-memory games, moving games
10. outside the class activities
11. discussing pictures
12. evaluation

Five Practical Activities

Activity 5.1 - Problem Solving

Posing problems can make activities more stimulating. Ask the children to listen for certain information when you are reading:

> "I am going to read you a story about the stages of a butterfly's life. Listen carefully for any details that tell you how the butterfly changes during each stage."

Activity 5.2 - Only give Part of the Information

> "Then one day the volcano stops erupting. And there it sits, our new island. Draw what you think our island looks like."

Show your students a picture of a littered beach and ask them to describe it. After they notice the litter ask them: "Who did this? Why was it done? Do you like the way it looks?" etc.

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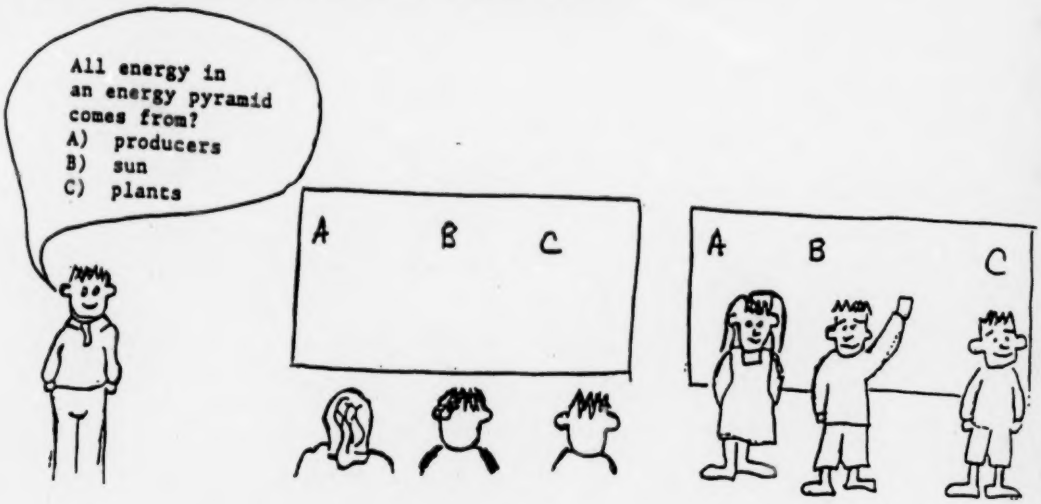
Activity 5.3 - Allow Students to Determine the Procedure

"One day when walking on the beach you discover something washed ashore. What was it?"

This could stimulate the children into creating an oral story or play based on the statement.

Activity 5.4 - A Moving Game

This is a good way to break the monotony of studying the multiple choice questions in past papers. Have students move around the room to stand beside what they consider to be the correct answer.



Activity 5.5 - A Memory Game

1st student	"I am a raindrop falling to the earth."
2nd student	"I am a raindrop falling to the earth and I water the plants."
3rd student	"I am a raindrop falling to the earth and I water the plants and I seep through the soil."
4th student	"I am a raindrop falling to the earth and I water the plants and I seep through the soil and ...."

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Reading and Writing Ideas

Activity 5.6 - Topical Word Lists

You may have done these activities before but remember that these activities are based specifically on a group of words you wish the students to learn and use.

Choose a set of words for your topic. The Red group will be able to cope with more words than the Green group. The Blue group will only be able to cope with a very limited number of words.

food chains	producers	mongoose	plants
herbivore	decomposers	snake	animals
omnivore	carnivore	mice	energy

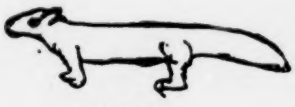
First you will need to re-enforce these words, especially with the blue group.

a) flashcards

b) picture matching

energy

plants



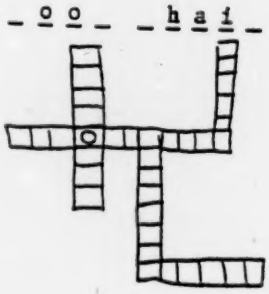
mongoose

c) mixed up words: cime vimnoore geyern tanlps lsnmiaa

d) missing letters: pr_du_ers f_od_h_ins h_rbi_o_e _ner_y

e) hangman

f) crosswords



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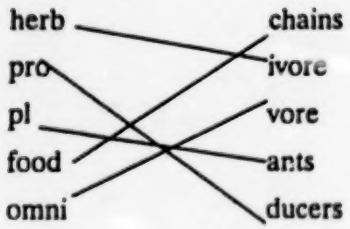
g) divided words



I'm sure you can think of more word practise activities.

Activity 5.7 - Game Models

Games are also a good way of re-enforcing words. They are a burden to make but they are a useful resource and can last a long time.

a) pairs game: Each word from the set is put onto two cards. Spread out all the cards on the desk. Ask the students to find a pair by turning over two cards at a time. If they do not get a pair, they must turn the cards back again.

b) word bingo

c) sentence bingo

d) word dominoes

al	eco	system	environ	ment	photo

Once you think the students are confident with the words, you can move onto the next stage. The Blue group will take longer to do this.

Activity 5.8 - Forming Simple Sentences

We then move on to forming simple sentences using the words they have been working with.

Any new words must be introduced carefully.

e.g. using the words: 'eat get from the and' the students could create:

Herbivores eat plants.

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Omnivores eat plants and animals.

Carnivores eat animals.

Plants get energy from the sun.

These sentences can then be put together with drawings, maps, diagrams and graphs.

Practical Activities

Activity 5.9 - Outdoor Games

Here are some ideas given to a sporting coach who showed concern about the effectiveness of his outdoor games lessons given to low stream students.

a. positive re-enforcement

b. get the 'difficult child' to lead

c. amusing punishments - 10 sit ups

d. games

e. varying the groups

f. repeating the same activity at different levels

g. change the 'tempo' of activities

h. vary the achievement level of activities.

Evaluation/Marking/Testing

Evaluation

The next stage is to test the students knowledge of the words and of the topic. The Blue group can do these activities as long as they are kept very simple.

a) mixed up sentences: energy get from sun the plants

b) close procedure: Mice _____ plants

c) true or false

d) simple comprehension questions

e) sequencing:

Snakes eat mice.

Plants get energy from the sun.

Mongoose eat snakes.

Mice eat plants.

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Marking

Although a task you may give a 'Blue group' student may seem trivial (matching words to a picture) it is important for the child's confidence to keep up with marking and to praise effort.

Testing

In your subject area you are not necessarily testing the students' ability to read and write - but e.g. their understanding of science or the environment. It's no use saying "by the time a child reaches 'this' grade he/she should be able to read and write". If they can't, they can't! Testing on a topic could be done orally e.g. multiple choice questions could be read aloud and the child could write down a, b, or c. This could be done with the poorest group or the whole class.

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ACTIVITIES FOR LISTENING, SPEAKING AND DRAMA ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Encouraging Oral Participation:

Listening and speaking skills need to be developed in all subject areas. Some strategies for encouraging oral participation are:

Activity 5.10 - Chinese Whispers

The group leader or a selected student thinks of a message. He/She whispers the message to the person sitting to the right. The message is passed around the group until it reaches the last person. He/She repeats the message aloud to the group.

The message can be made relevant to the subject area under study.

Activity 5.11 - 'Story' Telling

The group leader gives the first sentence of a story. Each person adds a sentence(s) to advance the plot.

Variations:- Each new sentence must begin with the next letter of the alphabet. With advanced students it is possible to practise the concepts of climax and denouement.

Applications to other subjects:-

- students can be asked to give the different stages in an experiment or technical practical
- students can be asked to give arguments alternately for or against the topic under study.

Activity 5.12 - Giving Instructions

Your ability to understand and give clear instructions is essential in a wide variety of study situations. See the activity below.

Work in pairs. You are going to find out from your partner where certain places are on a town plan. One student should look at Plan A, while the other looks at Plan B. Cover the plan you are not looking at. On each plan there are eleven small squares representing places. You know from the key what six of these places are. Find out from your partner what the others are, and write the numbers in the correct spaces. You can find out like this:

Example:

Student 1. Can you tell me the way to the bus station?

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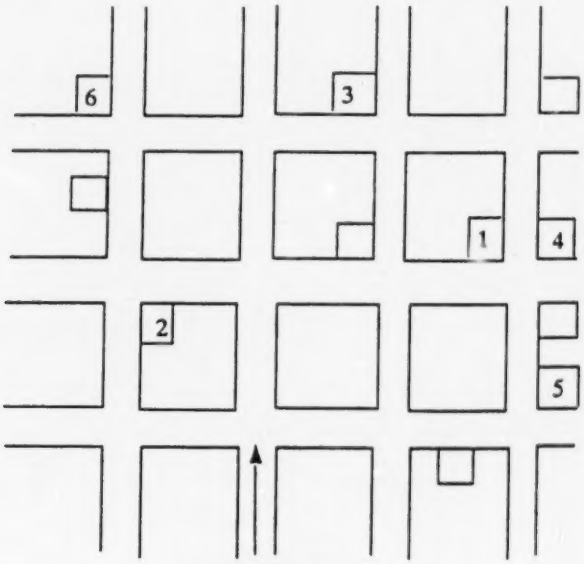
Student 2. Yes. Go straight ahead and take the second turning on your right. Go straight over the first crossroads. The bus station is at the second crossroads on the left-hand corner.

PLAN A

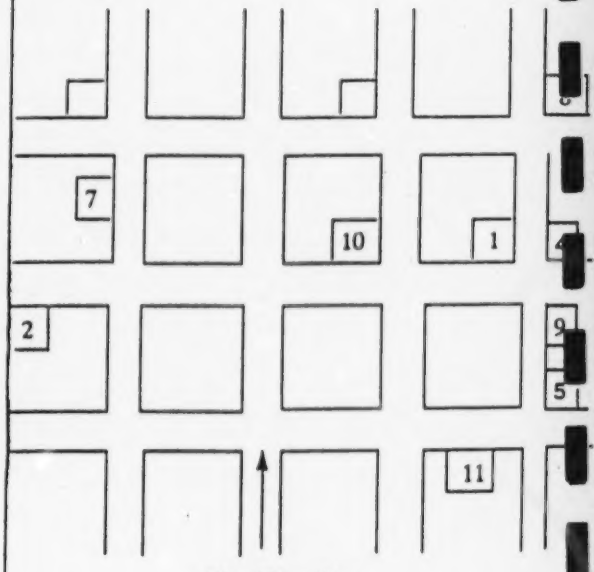
1. - Bus Station
2. - Market
3. - Hospital
4. - School
5. - Supermarket
6. - Railway-Station
7. - University
8. - Cinema
9. - Post Office
10. - Bank
11. - Clinic



Give Directions From Here

PLAN B

1. - Bus Station
2. - Market
3. - Hospital
4. - School
5. - Supermarket
6. - Railway-Station
7. - University
8. - Cinema
9. - Post Office
10. - Bank
11. - Clinic



Give Directions From Here

N.B.

Many pre-text activities also develop listening and speaking skills. See chapter 3 "Working with Texts".

The Importance of Questioning

Questions are powerful teaching tools for stimulating thought and checking student comprehension. They also can be used to encourage quiet students to participate, to promote interest in a topic, and to spark a discussion. Finally, a question and answer activity can increase motivation and provide variation from more passive forms of learning such as listening, reading and written activities.

Kinds of Questions

As a teacher, it is important to have a repertoire of various kinds of questions which can elicit different kinds and levels of thinking. Although there are many different ways to categorise questions, here they are broken into four different types of questions.

1. **Direct:**

   Asks for recall of facts and descriptions from memory. Examples of these types of questions would include questions requiring a "yes/no" answer, "either/or" answer or questions starting with the words "what or where". These questions usually have only one correct answer.

2. **Probing:**

   Follow-up questions for clarification, expansion, justification, or to redirect response. This type of question is used to follow an unsatisfactory or incomplete student response by asking the same student or others to think more deeply and improve the response. For example, "What do you mean by _____ ? or "Could you say more about that?" Non-verbal probes such as a nod, a smile or a gesture can also encourage students to say more or rethink their responses.

3. **Higher Order:**

   Asks for analysis, evaluation, problem solving, comparison, cause and effect, or inference. They challenge the students and are more open-ended than direct questions. Examples may include, "What do you think about this story and why? "How do you know that the earth is round? These questions often ask why, what and how.

4. **Divergent:**

   Asks for opinion, judgement, or interpretations. Because they are open-ended questions with many possible answers and no right or wrong, they can stimulate the imagination. Examples may include, "What is your opinion of the main character? "What would the earth be like without trees?

Effective Questioning Techniques

Mastering the skill of questioning, as with any other skill, takes some practice. Here are a few suggestions for effective questioning techniques:

1. Organise students into U-shape or circle when possible.

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2. Scatter questions widely around the class with alternating response patterns: individual, row, whole class, girls, boys, etc.

Drama/Role Plays : Developing Maths, Language and Oral Speaking Skills

Drama, especially role play is an effective way of presenting and investigating new concepts or investigating and evaluating learned concepts with students. Here are two examples:

Activity 5.13 - Bread and Beets : Developing Language and Maths Skills

One customer, one sales clerk and a narrator, any combination of males and females

Setting : A Grocery store

Customer :	I'm supposed to buy two loaves of bread and a can of beets
Clerk :	How much money do you have?
Customer :	Five dollars. How much is bread?
Clerk :	Ummmmm. It's on sale; three loaves cost two dollars seventy cents?
Narrator :	Freeze! How much will the customer pay for two loaves if three loaves cost two dollars seventy cents?
Customer :	Let's see. Two loaves would be _____ . Okay. How much are beets?
Clerk :	(Smiling) Guess!
Customer :	How can I guess?
Clerk :	I'll give you a hint. A can of beets is fifteen cents more than half the price of one loaf of bread.
Narrator :	Freeze! What is the cost of one loaf?
Customer :	Okay. Let's see. If three loaves are two dollars seventy cents, then one loaf is _____ . Now I need to know what half of that is.
Narrator :	Freeze! What is half the price of one loaf?
Customer :	That's _____ . And beets are fifteen cents more than that.
Narrator :	Freeze! What is _____ plus fifteen cents?
Customer :	So that's _____ for the beets! Now you tell me, what's the total for the bread and the beets?

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Clerk : Wait let me review. The bread was _____ for two loaves and the beets are _____ .

Narrator : Freeze! What's the total?

Clerk : So that means the total is _____ .

Customer : I should get back some change. I have five dollars; the bread and beets are _____ .

Narrator : Freeze! How much change should the customer receive?

Customer : I should get _____ in change.

Clerk : Great! We have enough to play some video games at the arcade.

Customer : (As they exit) No, my mom needs the money for the laundromat.

Activity 5.14 - Delivering Papers : Developing Language and Maths Skills

(Two performers and a narrator)

Setting: Anywhere

Student 2 is seated as student 1 enters

Student 1 : Hi, want to go to the mall?

Student 2 : I can't I have to deliver my papers.

Student 1 : How many papers do you deliver?

Student 2 : Ninety-six. They cost twenty-five cents each.

Narrator : Freeze! How much will student two collect after selling ninety-six papers at twenty-five cents each.

Student 1 : Wow! You earn _____ .

Student 2 : No, I don't get all that. I get only five cents for each paper.

Narrator : Freeze! How much does student two really earn for delivering ninety-six papers at five cents each?

Student 1 : But that's still _____ a week!

Student 2 : No, I earn that every day, seven days a week.

Student 1 : Every day?

Narrator : Freeze! How much does student two earn each week? Round to the nearest dollar.

Student 1 : So each week you earn about _____ . That's not bad!

Student 2 : No, I guess I do alright. But I've got to go now.

Student 1 : (Tagging along as student 2 exits) Ummmmmm. Do you think there might be any chance of my getting a paper route? Huh? Do you think?

Activity 5.15 - Boley: A Town You Could Bank On

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

BOLEY, A town you could bank on

BY CARMEN A. N'NAMDI

Here's a play excerpt you can perform. It's a true story about an African-American town—Boley, Okla.—that outsmarted the most feared bank robbers of the 1930s. After the Civil War, many towns like Boley sprang up, founded by African-Americans seeking a better life. With guts and gumption, they triumphed. Read what Booker T. Washington had to say about Boley in 1908, when the town was just 4 years old:

Boley, Oklahoma, is the youngest, the most enterprising, and in many ways the most interesting of the Negro towns in the United States....a characteristic product of the Negro immigration from the South and Middle West....

[The] movement has brought...land seekers and home builders, men who have come prepared to build up the country.... [They] have learned to build schools, to establish banks, and conduct newspapers. They have recovered something of the knack for trade that their foreparents in Africa were famous for. They have learned...the art of corporate and united action. This experience has enabled them to set up and maintain in a raw western community...an orderly and self-respecting government.

Boley...represents...a desire to do something...which shall demonstrate the right of the Negro, not merely as an individual, but as a race, to have a worthy and permanent place in the civilization that the American people are creating.

Now tell the story of November 23, 1932, the day this town's can-do citizens bested the henchmen of notorious bank robber Pretty Boy Floyd.

Cast
(in order of appearance):

Chorus
Bill Hazel, department store owner
James, the barber
Horace, pool hall owner
John, meat store owner
D.J. Turner, bank owner
Sheriff McCormick, Herbert's brother
Female bank customer
George Birdwell, bank robber
Second bank robber
Male bank customer
First female mourner
Male mourner

ACT I

Chorus *(syncopated rhythm):*
Can I tell you a story?
Do tell us, do tell.
'Bout a town in Oklahoma, called *Boley.*
Wel-l-l-l
The town was built in nineteen hundred and four.
Each person's dream was to make this town soar.
Uh-huh.... *[Begin to clap out a beat, then continue with poem.]*
Now there was ol' Mrs. Perry, she could boil, bake, or fry,
And Bill Hazel would see that you had clothes to buy.
Mr. Hunter could get you one of those new-fangled phones.
You could see D.J. Turner if you needed a loan.
The King family's ice house was right around the bend.
Mr. Young had four or five cotton gins.
If you needed a blacksmith, Mr. Owens was your guy.
And you called for the Cowans when someone took sick and died.
Mr. Woods' dry goods store was where you shopped.

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Mr. Washington had some good soda pop.
Oh they hammered and nailed.
Clunk!!!
They planted and grew
Homes and business, products they knew
Had come from their own perseverance and skill.
That made this town with an awfully strong will.
Look out now!
They called this town *Boley*.
One more time,
They called this town *Boley*.
Uh-huh.

[Curtain rises on the town's business owners, discussing how they've protected their bank against Floyd's gang.]

Bill Hazel: It's ready to go, fellas. If Pretty Boy Floyd and his bank robbers come calling, James, the alarm will ring in your barber shop. It will ring in your meat market, John. It'll ring in your pool hall, Horace, and my department store.

James: I guess it'll be up to me to give them a "hair-raising" reception. *[Brandishes scissors to drive home the point. Everyone laughs.]*

Horace: Well, I'll certainly wait for my "cue." *[Holds up cue stick. Everyone laughs.]*

John: And I'll be there to "meat" them when they come. *[Holds up package of meat.]*

Bill: Well, as far as I'm concerned, we can "clothes" this matter. *[Holds up clothes.]* You know, this is a heckuva town. To me, it's worth whatever it takes to protect it. *[D.J. Turner walks by, seemingly in a daze.]*

James: D.J., we're all wired up.

Turner *[still walking]:* Good.

Horace: If anything happens, we'll know at once. *[Turner keeps walking.]*

John: What's troublin' D.J.?

Bill: Think about it. How's the alarm set up? It's all triggered to go off when the last bill in the cash register is lifted. When they give Floyd the last dollar, the alarm will sound.

Horace: So who's the most likely one to pick up that last dollar?

Everyone: D.J.!

James: Right! He'll be the one standing there in the bank robber's face when the alarm goes off.

[Curtain]

ACT II

[At the bank, Turner takes off his coat and hangs it up.]

Turner: Good morning, Herbert. *[Walks to front window and stares out]*

Herbert McCormick *[opening teller's window for business]:* Good morning, D.J. Beautiful morning.

Turner *[listlessly]:* Yeah, beautiful, Herbert.

[Sheriff McCormick enters.]

Sheriff: Just checking. Everything okay in here? Any new rumors about Floyd? *[Turner shakes his head. Speaking to Herbert]* Hello, brother.

Herbert: How're you doin'?

Sheriff: You know, Herbert, I wish you'd accept a little advice from your big brother and keep a rifle inside that vault. D.J., Herbert ever tell you what a rabbit hunter he is? I know he's a good banker, but he's even a better hunter.

[D.J. ignores comment as sheriff leaves. Seeing a car drive up, Turner stands.]

Herbert: What is it, D.J.?

Turner: It's all right. It's not Floyd. I know what he looks like. *[Female customer enters and goes to teller's window. George*

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Birdwell and second bank robber enter and stand in line. Male customer enters and walks toward table to write a withdrawal slip.]

Male customer *[passing]:* Good morning, Mr. Turner.

Turner: Good morning, Mr. Wilson. *[Walks behind bank counter as female customer finishes business and walks toward door]* Herbert, I'll take over. You finish that paperwork. *[Looks at Birdwell, who's next in line]* Good morning. Can I help you, sir?

Birdwell: Yeah. I believe you can. Do you know you're being robbed? Hand over the dough and don't try any funny stuff. *[Female customer moans. Male customer ducks under table. Herbert slips to the floor and crawls toward the large vault door. Turner calmly begins pushing paper money under the cash slot beneath the steel bars of the teller's window.]*

Birdwell *[taking money]:* That's it, that's it. come on.... *[Turner stops briefly and looks at the cash register. Then he pulls out the last dollar and the alarm rings.]*

Second robber: You pulled that alarm! We told you not to! *[Lights blink on and off. Loud shots ring out. Turner's body jerks and everyone freezes. Blackout.]*

Sheriff's voice: We stopped 'em! Those were Floyd's men! Floyd didn't come!

Herbert, that was fast thinkin'! I told D.J. you were a topnotch rabbit hunter. Right, D.J.?

Herbert's voice: D.J.? D.J.?

Bill Hazel's voice: Oh no! They got D.J.! *[Curtain]*

Chorus:
Boo-hoo, Boo-hoo
Boo-hoo, Boo-hoo.

ACT III

[At Turner home. Townspeople line up to pay their respects.]

First female mourner: Roscoe Dungee wrote such a nice article in the newspaper about Mr. Turner.

Male mourner: He was a good man, Mr. Turner.

Second female mourner: Yes, he was. The article told how he helped all of us at different times in our lives.

First female mourner: And Herbert, you were so brave. You just fired right from the vault and kept everybody else from gettin' hurt.

Herbert: Well, I had to protect my friends and this town. I had to protect what I believe in.

Chorus: Well, Herbert had become a hero, I guess.
It sure had made his life a real mess.
He got letters, he got notes.
Of his bravery they wrote.
Then the threats came in – no way to avoid it.
Especially one that said Herbert had foiled it.
"You won't even make it till Christmas," it read.
It was from Floyd, and that's what it said.
So Herbert lived in constant danger of his life.
Protective of himself, protective of his wife.
But trouble never *did* show its face.
And everything seemed fine – at least in this case.
Herbert went on to live 35 more years.
And he kept the gang's gun as a little souvenir
And so we end the story of what happened that day,
And we carry the spirit of the Boley way.

Carmen A. N'Namdi is founder and headmistress of Nataki Talibah Schoolhouse, Detroit, Mich. This play is excerpted from N'Namdi's longer play of the same title. Booker T. Washington's comments are from his article written for the national magazine *The Outlook*, January 4, 1908.

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Activity 5.16 - 101 Ways to Write a Book Report

These activities are particularly useful for students working on an individualised English programme, or as an interesting alternative to the traditional book report for supplementary reading. For instance, students might be asked to complete their study of a book they have ready by selecting a specified number of activities to do from each category, and to make a written or oral report based upon them.

These suggestions work well if they are made readily accessible to students. The teacher might put each activity on a separate laminated card, assigning each a mark value (which is written on the reverse side), and filing the set in a box kept always in the same spot in the classroom. Students then choose whatever number of activities they need to meet the total mark requirements set for a particular assignment.

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1. Discuss how the main character is like or unlike people you know.
2. Pretend you're one character and introduce the other characters to your class.
3. As an interior decorator, how would you decorate a character's bedroom and why?
4. Invite one character to dinner and write a note of explanation to your mother.
5. Invite three celebrities to a party for the main character and explain your choice.
6. Write a page about a character beginning with the sentence "I was (any verb) by ...."

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7. Make a time line of the events in the life of the main character.
8. Write a chronology for one character.
9. Make up five interview questions (with answers) for the main character.
10. Explain where you think the main character will die.
11. For a film of your book, which actress would you choose for the part and why?
12. For a film of your book, which actor would you choose for the leading male and why?
13. Explain what the main character would prefer for Christmas and why.
14. Explain where the main character would prefer to vacation and why.
15. Explain what the main character would prefer for dinner and why.
16. Explain what the main character would prefer to wear and why.
17. Make a map of your book.
18. Compare where you live with the neighbourhood or town in your book.
19. Draw the setting of your book and explain it.
20. Write to the author and explain your reaction to this book.
21. Write to the author and explain why his book appeals to your age group.
22. Make up five interview questions (with answers) for the author.
23. Pretend you're the author and explain why you chose the title of your book.
24. Pretend you're the author and describe the part that was most fun to write.
25. Pretend you're the author and tell about your life and how this book fits into it.
26. Pretend you're the author and tell what else you've written.
27. Tell what you think happened before the story began.
28. Imagine that you're an eighteenth century student: How would you react to your book?
29. If your story took place one hundred years earlier, how would your main character act?
30. If your main character is from the past, how would he act if the book took place today?
31. If you were a man from Mars, how would you react to your book?
32. Describe what you think has happened to the main character after the book ended.
33. Explain why your book should be included in a capsule to be dug up in one hundred years.
34. Make a horoscope for the main character explaining his sign and his future.
35. Compare your book with another book you've read.
36. Describe an experience you've had that was like the experience of a character.
37. Compare your book with a movie or TV show of the same kind.
38. Design a book cover for your book.
39. Draw a comic strip of your book.
40. Draw a portrait of your favourite character and explain something about it.
41. Make any kind of illustration for your book (drawing, chart, graph) and explain it.

42. Cut words or pictures from the newspaper to make a collage or ad for your book.

43. Make a "WANTED" poster for the main character.

44. Make a "Thumbprint" book about your book (the figures come from thumbs dipped in paint) and write captions for these illustrations.

45. Make a bulletin board about your book.

46. Create a poster for your book.

47. Write an ad for your book.

48. Make a bookmark for your book.

49. Collect pictures that go with your book and describe each.

50. Write out your title decoratively and for each letter write a phrase about the book.

51. Deliver a sales talk for your book.

52. Make a tape about your book.

53. Write ten discussion questions for your book.

54. Dramatise your favourite incident.

55. As a famous movie star you have been asked to play a character; explain your answer.

56. Write a TV commercial for your book.

57. Make a TV script for one scene of your book.

58. Play "What's My Line" with one character: write out questions to portray him.

59. As a movie producer explain why you will or will not make your book into a movie.

60. Explain how your book could be made into a movie: clothes, setting, cars, props, etc.

61. Write any kind of poem about your book.

62. Write a letter to a friend describing this book you are going to send him.

63. Write a different ending for your book.

64. Keep a journal as you read your book: your reactions, thoughts, feelings.

65. Write a five-line "easy" poem about your book: a noun, then two adjectives, then three verbs, then a thought about the noun, and finally a synonym for the noun.

66. Write two articles for a newspaper published at the time of or in the country of your book.

67. Write an obituary for one character.

68. Write a diary for your favourite character.

69. Make a small dictionary (at least twenty-five words) for the subject of your book.

70. List fifteen interesting words from your book and tell why each is interesting.

71. List news words learned from your book: define them and give the sentences in which you found them.

72. Choose some of the following words and explain how each applies to your book: stupendous, exciting, breathtaking, horrendous, fabulous, etc.

73. Why does your book begin as it does?

74. Quote passages of good description and good dialogue and explain them.

75. Find and write down twenty-five similes and metaphors.

76. Think about who the narrator is: then write one scene from the point of view of another character and explain the switch.

77. Do research on any topic connected with your book.

78. In the READER'S GUIDE find five articles related to your topic.

79. Find a quotation applicable to your book and tell how it applies.

80. See if your book is in the library; then write a letter to the librarian either congratulating her for choosing it or asking her to order it.

81. Find a poem which applies to your book; write it out and explain how it applies.

82. Make a job application for the main character and fill it in.

83. What did you learn about the vocation of the leading adult character?

84. Find newspaper want ads of interest to a character and explain why.

85. Write a business letter to the publisher and order copies of your book; explain why.

86. From the yellow pages of a phone book, pick out businesses you think the main character would be interested in and explain why.

87. How did the book change your way of thinking?

88. Use this as a topic sentence. "This book made me (any verb)

89. Explain what the main character would be least likely to do and why.

90. Did any character change during the book? Explain how and why.

91. What problems did the main characters have and how did they meet them?

92. If the book has a villain, why was his punishment justified?

93. As a psychiatrist, analyse the conflicts and problem of a character.

94. Would you like to have a character as a friend? Explain.

95. Defend: This book should be read by everyone who hates reading.

96. Defend: This book should never be spoiled by a teacher requiring a book report.

97. FREE CHOICE: Do anything you want in connection with your book.

98. How many reasons can you think of to take your book to an isolated Antartica camp?

99. Describe a field trip you would like to take because of your book.

100. Write one page on this:

Why ..... should not read this book.

101. Make a crossword puzzle from your book.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR SCIENCE AND MATHS

From Copying to Comprehension in Science

Introduction

The following pages consist of notes presented at a teachers' workshop in the Caribbean. They highlight some excellent problems encountered by science teachers and their students in the region. Following the formulation of the problem, the facilitator suggests language support strategies that the teacher could consistently use over time to address these problems.

I am sure we have all noticed that students coming into secondary schools have a marked preference for the "copying" type of work as opposed to anything that requires mental effort, organising thoughts, research or interpretation.

Although we have a good supply of text books, I quickly found that you could not just tell students at any level to make notes on anything from "ruminants" to "relativity". Their mouths just fell open at the prospect. The most enterprising student might open his book at random and say hopefully, "Copy that, Sir?"

I also found that students in the fifth form getting ready for CXC Examinations had their greatest difficulty understanding what the question was asking them to do. Often, if you could explain what the question meant you would find they knew the answer. For example:

> "Give two hazards associated with drinking water from a river" (poison, fall in and drown?). But they didn't know and couldn't guess the meaning of "hazard". So, they didn't answer it. We could call this a technical vocabulary problem, e.g. anaesthetic, pesticide, pathogenic.
>
> There is also instructional vocabulary. Words like "justify", "evaluate" and "annotate" cause instant resignation.

What is the meaning of this statement? "Give one advantage and one disadvantage of freezing as a method of preserving food". ALMOST ALL students will answer: "it stops the food spoiling" for advantage and "the food will eventually spoil" for disadvantage. Probably, you might have said something like: "It preserves the flavour better" implying a comparison with canning, pickling or drying. And: "The equipment and electrical energy needed are expensive compared to ...". What is implied by the word "advantage" - this may be too subtle for them.

So far, I've mentioned three problems:

1. How to get students to think about relationships instead of just copying.
2. Learning to extract relevant information from the text book.
3. Improving vocabulary and learning to interpret examination questions.

The following tasks illustrate some approaches to these problems. They may or may not be successful. Certainly, continuity over one or two years will be necessary.

Language Support Strategies in Science Teaching

1. Listening

- for sequence
- for key words and phrases (verbs, chemicals, etc.)
- in order to label a drawing, fill in a diagram or table
- for note-taking.

2. Speaking

- repetition of new words
- encourage predicting and hypothesising
- use oral work prior to written
- encourage group work: giving each other instructions and results, discuss true/false statements, matching and other collaborative activities.

3. Reading

- make reading active
- give visual input
- use flow charts for instructions
- use tick charts
- give word glossary
- give sentences to put in sequence
- true/false exercises
- test understanding of discourse features, reference: it's, they, etc.
- break down text into paragraphs, and sentences into single clauses
- look for patterns in the text
- make headings for paragraphs.

4. Writing

- develop text cohesion
- use of correcting words e.g. then, next, after that, and, etc.
- give beginnings and endings of sentences to be matched
- sentences to put in sequence
- use close exercises (gap filling)
- give selection of possible answers, true/false exercises
- tense conversions (past - future, etc.).

Language Strategies for Teaching Biology

Introduction: Some of the main problem areas in science seem to be:

1. Vocabulary
2. Formulating an answer
3. Exam style English
4. Practical report writing
5. Reading and understanding text.

Each of these five areas are discussed and strategies for teaching them are included.

1. Vocabulary:

Science language is new and often not used in regular English. Three main areas:

A) Specific words used only in science:

e.g. hydrochloric acid, pancreas, carbohydrate, barometer, enzyme, latent heat, specific heat capacity, titration.

Strategy: develop a vocabulary book or list

- spelling tests
- comprehension test/game
- vocab card game.

B) Common words with a more specific meaning in science:

e.g diet, respiration, excretion, materials, properties, diaphragm.

Strategy: reinforce definition

- use funny examples - I'm going to excrete you!

C) High level English words:

e.g. component, facilitate, adapted for.

Strategy: start using these words early!

2. Formulating an Answer:

Students are unable to construct appropriate sentences in response to questions posed.

Problem - Do they simply not understand the question, or the science, or are they unable to put what they know on paper?

Often pupils' verbal explanations are much better than their written answers, suggesting that they understand the science, but how do we help them develop their oral and written expression in English?

3. Exam Style English:

Students do not encounter spoken English of this type, (nor do I), they are not used to it and it confuses and intimidates them. i.e. a question that is essentially quite simple will be inaccessible to the student.

e.g. "list the cellular components of blood"
"in reference to"
"compare and contrast"
"your answer should highlight"
"discuss the importance of"
"explain"
"analyze"
"interpret"

Strategy: - practise and exposure

i.e. dissect questions and discuss what they really mean (it is quite valid to devote a lesson or more to this kind of activity).

4. Practical Report Writing and CXC:

Students need to be able to explain/communicate what they have done in a relevant and concise way. They need to use the conventional methods:

- Title, Aim, Apparatus, Diagram, Method, Results, Conclusions, Evaluation (there are alternatives to this format of course!)

- Use of the past passive tense.

- Agreement of noun and verb i.e. they were/it was

- Appropriate vocabulary -

  e.g. forceps (not tweezers)

  beaker (not jar/cup/jug)

  crushed (not mashed up!)

Strategy: start to model and reinforce as early as possible!

i.e. give the "proper" way in Form 1 - make them copy method etc., from the board. However, it is also important to allow freedom to express in their own way as well.

5. **Reading and Understanding Text:**

Students don't understand what they are reading.

e.g. when given a clear, step by step instruction sheet they read it and they say "Sir, Sir, (Ms, Ms?) what do I do now?' or more likely "W'appen Sir?"

This has implications for revision too since most think revision is just reading notes over again.

Also students are often unable to transfer information in one form to a new situation.

There are a number of text activities that can be used to make reading more active. These depend on the type of text being read.

Different types of texts include:

(a) Instruction text

(b) Classification text

(c) Structure text

(d) Process text.

Reading/Writing Experiments

The language of Science can be very difficult for students e.g. the use of past passive tense in the writing up of experiments.

A useful way of analysing this is to compare the format with an easier format - a good 'easier format' is a dialogue as this could incorporate role play.

Activity 5.17 - Floating an Egg in Water

The activity could be turning a role play into a written experiment or vice versa.

Here is an example:

First, some water was heated in a pan until it was warm. Then as much salt as would dissolve in the water ... etc.

Activity: Turn this experiment into a dialogue between two students.

Student A : What did you do first?

Student B : Well, I got a pan and heated some water in it. I didn't boil the water but I made sure it was quite warm. Then I put some salt in it.

Student A : How much salt did you put in? Was it a lot or only a little?

Student B : I put in quite a lot. In fact, I put in as much as would dissolve in the warm water.

Student A : What did you do next?

Student B : After I'd poured the solution into a jar, I waited a few minutes to let it settle. Then - and this is very important - I slowly poured some ordinary cold water on top of the salt solution. I did this very carefully indeed. In fact, I used a stick and let the water slowly drip down it.

Student A : Why did you have to be so careful when you poured the ordinary water in the jar?

Student B : Well, it's important to let the ordinary water float on top of the warm salty solution. If you pour it in quickly, it'll mix with it, and then you can't do the experiment.

Student A : I see. What did you do next?

Student B : Well, then I placed an egg carefully in the jar.

Student A : What happened?

Student B : The egg sank to the bottom of the ordinary water but it floated on top of the salt water.

Student A : Good gracious. That's surprising. I hadn't realised it'd do that.

Student B : Yes, it looked quite remarkable. The egg seemed to be floating in the middle of the water in the jar.

Student A : What was the reason for that?

Student B : It's easy to explain. An egg's heavier than ordinary water and so it sinks. But at the same time it's lighter than salt water. So it won't sink in the salt solution.

Student A : Does this experiment always work?

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Student B : Yes, if you're very careful when you pour the ordinary water in the jar. By the way, instead of letting it drip slowly down a stick, you can use a funnel. You pour it very slowly through the funnel. Anyway, it usually works unless you disturb all the water in the jar. If you stir the ordinary water and the salt water together, the egg'll sink right to the bottom of the jar.

Student A : Well, you live and learn!

Scrambled Text (Instruction Type) for a Science Experiment

Instruction texts are designed to give instructions : undertaking an experiment, making something, using apparatus.

The demand made by an instruction text is that the reader constructs, in his or her imagination, what should happen in reality - a sequence of steps and precautions. Reading an instruction text requires reference to reality as well as to the text. Ideally, it involves reflection on the purpose of the activity and on outcomes.

Directed-reading activities for instruction texts are designed to get pupils to:

- reflect on proper procedures and use of apparatus
- predict or anticipate necessary precautions
- reflect on results.

One of the most widely used reading activities for instruction texts is the scrambled text or sequencing activity.

> The task for pupils is to use logical cues to arrange the segments in the order which makes the most sense or is the most practical.

Activity 5.18 - Measuring the Heat Per Second Given Out by a Bunsen Burner Flame

Instructions:

1. Read through each slip of paper and try to visualise the procedure.
2. Try to reconstruct the method which would be followed by moving around the sentences into the correct order.
3. The following sixteen sentences are in the current order. Omit the numbers. Cut them out on 16 separate strips of paper. Put them in an envelope so they are scrambled and give your groups or pairs of students the envelope to reassemble in the correct sequence.

N.B. The title of the activity is:

> **"To measure the heat given out by a bunsen burner flame each second".**

The scrambled text is placed in an envelope and handed out to students.

1. measure the mass of a clean dry 250 cm^3 beaker
2. add approx 50 cm^3 cold water to the beaker
3. measure the mass of the beaker plus water
4. take the initial temperature of the water

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5. place the beaker on a tripod with a gauze
6. et the bunsen burner onto a blue flame
7. place the bunsen burner under the beaker
8. start the stop-watch
9. after about 5 minutes, remove the bunsen from under the beaker
10. stop the stop-watch and note the reading
11. record the new temperature of the water
12. calculate the mass of water in the beaker (in kg)
13. calculate the temperature rise of the water
14. calculate the number of joules of heat received by the water assuming that the specific heat capacity of water is 4200 J/KgK
15. calculate the number of seconds for which the water was heated
16. calculate the number of joules received by the water each second.

Explaining an Abstract Concept in Chemistry or Physics

1. First, review previous work related to the concept.
2. Second, use physical, everyday objects i.e. students, kettles, see-saws etc.
3. Extend into a physical object that is relevant but less familiar.
4. Explain using the scientific terms.

Example: Moules

1. Review chemical equations i.e.

   1A + 2B = 1AB

2. Students are students no matter what the size i.e. have a fat one and a thin one - they are both students.

   The same is for atoms, you have heavy ones and light ones but they are still one atom.

3. Using aids previously prepared show that one Kilogram of A is 20 atoms (balls of plasticine).

   One Kilogram of B is 40 atoms (balls of papier mâché).

   Using cocktail sticks produce molecule AB (needing 1A and 2B).

4. Explain that in order for us to work out the reaction when we use the same mass of two different chemicals we need to know how heavy they are relatively to find out how many atoms (i.e. balls in box) there are.

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Using Language in Mathematics

There are three main areas:

1. Type of language and method of presentation of CXC questions.
2. Translation of word problems into a mathematical solution, possibly using symbols.
3. Understanding Maths as a language in its own right.

One view that may be held of Maths is:

> "To many people most of the concepts and processes with which mathematics is concerned belong to a realm of thought which resembles a shadowy land, where through the mists one occasionally glimpses now one feature, now another. It is a land of mystery where the clear outlines of the everyday world experience are replaced by cloud-like structures whose boundaries are uncertain and whose forms change, so that what one moment seems fixed and clear-cut, at another appears to have altered beyond all recognition."
>
> **(Teaching Maths from 11 - 16, McNab and Cummie)**

Other perceptions of Maths are presented in Laurie Buxton "**Do you panic about Maths**".

Mathematics is:

a collection of rules and facts to be remembered

a mystique accessible to a few

concerned largely with computation

a subject in which one's own views and opinions are of no importance

full of x's and y's and incomprehensible formulae.

The dilemma of teachers is that Maths language is very precise, it obeys exact rules and does not convey meaning except by exact interpretation of its symbols, but often these symbols and technical language can confuse.

The way Maths is presented will obviously have an effect on the way students think about it. Often students are too rule dominated and find it difficult to think of solutions in a common sense way. Also formal notation can cause great confusion in many students' minds.

e.g. $3x - 3 = 3$ - this error is quite common

e.g. $2^{1/3} \times 3^{1/4} = 6^{1/2}$

this is a problem because $2^{1/3}$ is said $2 + 1/3$

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Ways to Overcome Problems

Try to present Maths in a creative way and show it's development in a historical context to show that it is not just a prescribed set of rules implemented by some being above!

Explain how we come by the notation i.e. do practical work which shows how a formula comes about e.g. area of a rectangle or circumference of a circle.

Make sure that the teaching sequence is carefully planned to help students peel off layers of the problem to get to the heart of the Maths idea. Encourage students to think logically about what they are doing when they use Maths symbols.

The teacher can do this by:

a) encouraging verbal interaction in class which stimulates questioning and benefits the slower students who can learn from others' ideas.

b) encouraging students to use English as part of their solutions to problems. This should enable them to see the steps they are following more clearly and help them to spot errors.

Use language that students are familiar with and leave the introduction of technical vocabulary to a later date.

Use a simple directed style and use pictures, symbols and diagrams.

Many words have one meaning in English and one in Maths and students need to be made aware of this - matrix, product, power, index, etc.

Maths language often seems difficult e.g. hypotenuse, isosceles, polygon. Pupils need to be calmed so that they do not associate difficult words with difficult ideas.

Good Luck!

SUMMARY

There were so many good presentations at the three workshops in the Caribbean, that it was hard to divide those to be included in an appendix and those to be used as examples within the discussion. We therefore decided to include a final chapter of the book which addressed problems faced by the teachers of less academically able students.

As the educator Jean Piaget said, we go through various stages when learning concepts, and in order to reach abstract levels of understanding, we must first be able to work using concrete materials. We hope that the eighteen practical ideas and activities highlighted in this chapter for reading, literature, oral expression, drama, science, and maths have helped to provide some concrete activities for the less academically able students that you teach.

CONCLUSION

That's it! That's our book! All the many people who worked on putting this together hope that each and every educator reading this will find some useful information and try at least a few of the fifty practical activities included for classroom use.

Critics of education have often said that teachers are like drivers of a car, presenting children with what they see in their rear-view mirrors rather than looking straight ahead down the road to the future. We all know that the road has many curves, barriers and potholes, nevertheless forward we go as best we can. We are preparing our youth for lives in the 21st century and it will take most of our energy, flexibility, creativity, patience and tenacity to assist them with their journey.

Language is the medium of instruction we use as a tool to preserve and promote our culture. As teachers we view this culture through the precedents and policies promoted by our employers be they local school authorities, boards of education or ministries of education. Whether we teach in the multi cultural classrooms of Europe, North America or the Caribbean, it is important for us to focus our institution on helping our learners learn both the "how" as well as the "what" if we are to achieve our goals and better our profession.

We are all language teachers attempting to communicate ideas and concepts with those we teach. The critical thinking and creative self-expression of our learners should be our goal! This goal can be accomplished through composing as well as comprehending, through oracy (speaking and listening) as well as literacy (writing and reading) across the entire curriculum. "Thinking globally and acting locally" is a concept for the future that applies to all people on our planet. This entails development of the 3 R's - reading, writing, and arithmetic, as well as the 3 I's - integration, interaction and individualisation.

As we have seen in the last decade, much more can be accomplished ....

- if we remove barriers to access and include rather than exclude various groups of people
- if we discover how our students learn best and then stress multiple approaches when teaching
- if we assist students to collaborate in the classroom just as we expect them to do in the workplace later on and finally
- if we integrate language across the subjects that we are assigned to teach.

Students can no longer collect information as in the past. The students of today and those in the future need to learn how to critically process, evaluate and produce their own knowledge from the information received along the super highways of their lives. Teachers are the gate keepers of these highways. How will you handle the task?

BOOKLIST

The following list of written resources were helpful when compiling this book. Whenever possible the authors have been indentified within the text of this training manual.

Yorkey, R.	Study Skills for Students of English
Heaton & Dunmore	Learning to Study English
OVP	Oxford English Resourse Books for Teachers
Hedge, T.	Writing
Morgan & Rinvolueri	Vocabulary
Wajmryb R.	Grammar Dictation
CVP	Cambridge Handbook for Language Teachers
P. Vr.	Grammar Practice Activities
P. Vr.	Discussions that Work
P. Vr.	5 Minute Activities
Broronjohn & Whitaker	More Word Games
Broronjohn S.	Does It Have to Rhyme
Koch, K.	Rose, Where Did You Get that Red?
Nyrne, D.	Teaching Writing Skills
Gawith, G.	Library Alive
Gawith, G.	Reading Alive
Burton, L.	Thinking Things Through - Problem Solving in Mathematics
Bolt, B.	Mathematical Activities
Paling, D.	Teaching Mathematics in Primary Schools
Maneb, & Cummie	Teaching Mathematics 11 - 16
Williams & Herring	Keywords and Learning
--	Bush Talk : a St. Lucian Magazine
ILEA	Modular Secondary Science Resources - "Acid Rain is a Problem"
Perera, K.	The Language of School Subjects, "Some Linguistic Difficulties in School Textbooks
Forsyth, I.	Gnosis "Understanding Children's Spelling"
Stephens, J.	Spelling Strategies
Miles & Chapman	How Can We Help? Examples of Correcting Work Individually
N'Nandi, C.	A Play in three Acts - Boley, A Town You Could Bank On
Torbe, M.	Teaching Spelling

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Other publications in this series include:

Maths and Science

1. A Practical Workbook for CXC Biology
2. Data Analysis Questions for Science Subjects. A Resource Booklet
3. Exercises and Activities in Basic Number Work
4. Fractions. Activities and Exercises for Teaching Fractions in Secondary Schools
5. Lower School Maths. Lesson Plans and Activities for Ages 7 -9 Years.
6. Maths and Science Booklet
7. Teaching Directed Numbers at Secondary School Level
8. Teachers' Resource Material for Integrated Science. Ideas for Teaching Integrated Science in Secondary Schools.
9. Upper School Maths Lesson Plans and Activities for Ages 9 -11 Years

Special Needs

10. An Introduction to Children with Special Needs for Teachers in Mainstream Education
11. The Alpha Centre: A Special School for Special Children. A Curriculum Checklist for Special Educational Needs.

English Language and Literacy

12. Language and Learning. A Practical Guide to Help with Planning your Early Childhood Programme.
13. Promoting Reading and Library Use in your School: A Resource Pack.
14. Strategies for Improving Language Across the Curriculum. Ideas and Activities for Every Classroom.
15. Your School Library. How it Works and How to Keep it Working.

Other

16. Beekeeping. A practical Guide to Beekeeping.
17. Caribbean Copy Art. A Resource Book for Teachers to Copy.
18. Methodology in Music Education.
19. Organising Workshops. A Practical Guide.

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